Sergei Ignatov

# The Body of God





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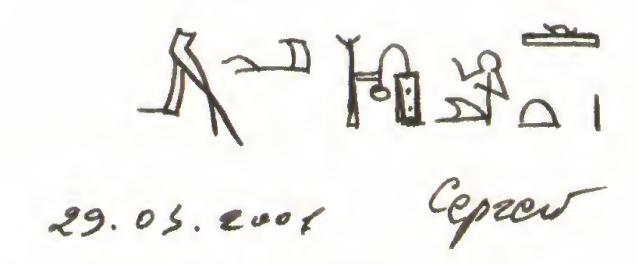
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#### THE BODY OF GOD

Sergei Ignatov

LECTURES DELIVERED AT NEW BULGARIAN UNIVERSITY

Translated by Katerina Popova



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#### INTRODUCTION

The Egyptian state is the living body of God, i.e. of the king. This is the presumption of this book.

The founder of Egyptology, Jean-Francois Champollion, once wrote: "In such inquiries one can progress with the help of facts only, and monuments are the only reliable facts..." This is perhaps the best definition of Egyptological studies: patient and conscientious study of the monuments of ancient Egypt. The monuments of ancient Egyptian culture are located primarily in the Nile valley. The evidence of Egyptian penetration far south into ancient Nubia, ancient Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine to the east, imported Egyptian artifacts in the eastern Mediterranean lands, are also of interest to Egyptology.

The wealth of sources has facilitated the development of the following main branches in the young science of Egyptology in a comparatively short period of time: ancient Egyptian linguistics (study of the script, vocalization, morphology and syntax, genetic relations of the Egyptian language), textology, history, archaeology, history of culture, etc. This classification is conventional. The main method of Egyptological studies is

the complex approach to monuments.

In the tradition of Manetho's Aegyptiaca (4th-3rd century B.C.), the chronology of ancient Egypt is based on kingdoms and dynasties: Early Dynastic Period (Dynasties I-II), Old Kingdom (Dynasties III-VI), First Intermediate Period (Dynasties VII-X), Middle Kingdom (Dynasties XI-XIII), Second Intermediate Period (Dynasties XIV-XVII), New Kingdom (Dynasties XVIII-XX), Late Period (Dynasties XXI-XXXI). The kings before Dynasty I are grouped in the so-called Dynasty Zero, while post-Dynasty XXXI Egypt was incorporated in the

Graeco-Roman world. The different periods in the history of ancient Egypt have not been studied equally.

The terms "Egyptian" and "Coptic" come from one and the same ancient Egyptian place-name, Hw.t-k'-Pth, conventionally translated as "Home of the Double of Ptah," the name of the main temple at Memphis. As one of the names of the city, the term eventually came to designate Egypt itself. The Egyptian language forms a separate group in the Afro-Asiatic (Hamito-Semitic) language family. There are seven distinct stages in the development of the language: proto-Egyptian (pre-literate), from the separation of the Egyptian language from the Afro-Asiatic language community to the end of the fourth millennium B.C.; Old Egyptian, c. the 32nd-23rd/22nd century B.C.; Middle Egyptian, 23rd/22nd-15th/14th century B.C.; Late Egyptian, 17th/16th - 7th century B.C.; Demotic, 7th century B.C. - 5th century A.D.; Old Coptic, 3rd century B.C. -5th century A.D.; Coptic, second half of the 2nd century A.D. (?) - 17th/20th century A.D. (?). The earliest known Egyptian inscription is hieroglyphic and dates back to the mid-fourth millennium B.C. The cursive forms of script - hieratic and demotic - evolved from the hieroglyphs. Modern Egyptology defines Egyptian writing as consonantal morphemicideographic. After the 2nd-3rd century A.D., the old forms of writing were gradually replaced by a new script based on the Greek alphabet. This process probably goes back to the 3rd century B.C.

No philological treatise written by an ancient Egyptian is extant. Ancient secular and ecclesiastical sources offer sparse and controversial evidence about the Egyptian language and script. Herodotus, Diodorus and many others mention the hieroglyphic and demotic scripts only, and the hieratic is first documented by Clement of Alexandria. Porphyrus is believed to have distinguished four types of script. Scholars were baffled by this controversial evidence for centuries, their entire

efforts to decipher the ancient inscriptions boiling down to attempts at interpretation.

There are two milestone events in the birth of Egyptology: the expedition of Napoleon Bonaparte to Egypt (1798), which led to the many-volume Description de 'l' Egypte and the September 1822 letter by Jean-Francois Champollion, Lettre a M. Dacier, in which the French scholar announced that he had finally deciphered ancient Egyptian writing after many years of research. As a result of the efforts of his followers - R. Lepsius, K. Brugsch, G. Maspero, A. Erman and others - an enormous amount of material was studied by the end of the 19th century: Egyptian inscriptions were no longer deciphered but read, and conditions were created for the study of the historical processes in the Nile valley.

As a result of the efforts of the German school of Egyptology headed by A. Erman, the first modern grammar of Late Egyptian appeared at the end of the 19th century, followed by Erman's classical study on Middle Egyptian (Agyptische Grammatik, Berlin, 1928). Meanwhile, Erman's student K. Sethe published his fundamental study on the Egyptian verb (Das agyptische Verbum in Altagyptischen, Neuagyptischen und Koptischen. Bd. I-III, Leipzig, 1899-1902). The study of Egyptian history scored its first major achievement in the late 19th and early 20th century. J.H. Breasted published his History of Egypt and the now classical corpus of translated historical records (Ancient Records of Egypt. Vols 1-5, Chicago, 1906). In 1927, the most prominent representative of the British school of Egyptology, A.H. Gardiner, published his Egyptian Grammar (London, 1927), the "holy bible" for contemporary Egyptologists.

On the proposal and under the guidance of A. Erman, after 1897 Egyptologists from all countries started compiling a dictionary of the Egyptian language, first published in five volumes in 1926-1931.

Monuments are the main source of information about the history of the Nile valley.

Archaeology and written records have an auxiliary role.

I am writing this Introduction with a sense of satisfaction. In the past ten years, Sofia has become the first and only centre in Southeastern Europe to have passed the thorny path from Myth to Egyptology.

On the personal plane, this perspective of ancient Egypt is a sequel to the endless discussions which we had with my late teacher I.V. Vinogradov in the long St Petersburg nights. That is why I dedicate this modest work to the Ka of my unforget-table teacher I.V. Vinogradov, The True of Voice.

#### Chapter One

## THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS AT THE DAWN OF HISTORY

The classification of prehistoric cultures in the Nile valley is based on archaeological evidence and was proposed by Sir Flinders Petrie at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since there are practically no surviving mounds made up of successive settlements whose stratigraphic layers could serve as a basis of prehistoric chronology in northeastern Africa, Petrie proposed a chronology based on a comparative study of the pottery which he found in a number of predynastic necropolises, notably at Naqada, Abadiya and Hu. A considerably earlier period (el-Badari, Middle Egypt) was identified in subsequent excavations. Modern Egyptology has adopted Petrie's chronology of cultures with insignificant corrections:

- I. Badarian culture, before c. 4000 B.C., the Neolithic in the Nile valley. This period also includes the northern Egyptian cultures of Faiyum and Merimda Beni Salama, and the southern Egyptian Deir Tasa.
- **II. Predynastic Period**, the entire fourth millennium B.C., divided into two phases:
- 1. Naqada I or Amrian (from today's el-Amra), first predynastic phase.
- 2. Naqada II or Gerzean (from today's el-Gerza), second predynastic phase.

Some scholars refer to the final phase, which covers the emergence of the first historical Egyptian dynasty (Dynasty I), as Naqada III, a separate period.

The Nile valley is presumed to have been settled as a result of the draught in northern Africa following the last glacial period. Ten thousand years ago, today's deserts were fertile grasslands (savannah). The rock drawings of the inhabitants of the savannah (now Sahara) from the late Paleolithic and Mesolithic depict a rich wildlife: giraffes, ostriches, antelopes, buffaloes, elephants and hunting scenes. The general picture, which testifies to a milder and wetter climate, is supplemented by numerous dried-up beds of rivers that once flowed into the Nile from the west. Traces of camps of tribes, forced to move to those parts by the onsetting draught after the European glacier moved northwards, bringing about major climatic changes in northern Africa, have been found precisely around those dried-up tributaries of the Nile. The evidence of material culture around those former tributaries of the Nile goes back to the late Paleolithic.

The constant advance of the desert and the drying up of the last riverbeds drove numerous tribes into the Nile valley itself. This process coincides with the Neolithic and is associated with the genesis of agriculture. The archaeological finds from late Neolithic cultures in northeastern Africa (sixth - fourth millennium B.C.) attest to a settled way of life, experience in crop- and cattle-raising, hunting, fishing and gathering. Crafts appeared, along with metal-working. The Neolithic saw a transition from consumptive to productive economy in the Nile valley.

Further progress in the predynastic period is closely associated with the regime of the Nile.

The boundaries within which the Egyptian civilization originated and developed were outlined by Nature itself: from the First Cataract of the Nile (to the south) to the Mediterranean (to the north). The natural oasis - the gift of the river - is

about 1,200 km long and is hemmed in by the desert to the west and the east.

Egypt naturally divides into Upper or southern (the upper part of the river) and Lower or northern Egypt. Upper Egypt is quite narrow. It varies in width from one to 20 km. Two hundred kilometres away from its mouth, the Nile once forked out into branches similar to the Greek letter "delta." The valley fans out considerably in this very part of northern Egypt, the Delta.

The rhythm of life in northeastern Africa is set by the river. The Nile flows straight to the north, and this had a powerful impact on the ancient Egyptian concept of the World. The river's waters rise dramatically in mid-July. This is the start of the flood, which peaks in August and September. The river is swollen by the melting snow in the mountains of Ethiopia in spring and by the concurrent rains in tropical Africa. During the flood, its level rises by 14 m to the south and by three to ten metres to the north. This season lasts four months (until mid-November) and works wonders for the soil, irrigating and saturating it with a rich organic and mineral deposit.

In the predynastic period, which spans the fourth millennium B.C., northeastern Africa lived in the Aeneolithic (a transitional period between the Stone and Bronze ages). People started building dikes and dams. The purpose was to improve irrigation of arable land. They dug canals to drain the land before sowing. This irrigation system in the Nile valley served as the basis of the economy in this part of the world from the first half of the fourth millennium B.C. to the first half of the present 20th century. In all likelihood, people struggled to gain control over the river throughout the fourth millennium B.C.

The predynastic period (Naqada I and II) logically and naturally merged with the first historical Egyptian dynasty, the Early Dynastic Period in Egypt.

Prehistoric Egyptians were slim, with elongated heads and slightly oval faces, dark and curly hair and rather hairless

bodies, i.e. they had the typical features of the Mediterranean race. This anthropological type, however, changed with the influx of broad-headed settlers from Palestine of a mixed Anatolian-Semitic type, which led to the genesis of the historical Egyptians. Those sleek people of medium height, with solid skulls and of sturdy build, with thick wrists and ankles, can be found today too, especially in the countryside. The women are shorter and slimmer than the men, and obese females are an exception.

A comprehensive analysis of the extant sources shows that the foundations of an early class-based society and a powerful state were laid in northeastern Africa in the second predynastic phase, perhaps towards its end. We do not have specific evidence about the development of society and government on the eve of Dynasty I, but the inscriptions of Egyptian kings from the end of the second predynastic phase how that Egyptian writing by that time employed the entire arsenal of signsphonetic and determinatives - typical of historical Egypt. The cursive script evolved on the basis of hieroglyphs. Scribes made computations up to 1,000,000! These facts explain the rapid changes that took place in Archaic Egypt, which succeeded the predynastic period.

In Dynastic Egypt, Upper Egypt and everything associated with it had primacy over Lower Egypt: for instance, in the titulary of the king, "King of Upper and Lower Egypt," in the announcement of the crowns, "the Crown of Upper and Lower Egypt," in listing administrative offices. Just over a century ago, the German scholar K. Sethe presumed that those two parts of the land must have once been two separate kingdoms which were subsequently united. The two kingdoms originated as a result of the unification and subjugation of the relatively independent ancient administrative units which Egyptologists traditionally designate with the Greek term "nome" (district). The Egyptian word for this unit of administration was sepat.

In various periods of its history, ancient Egypt was divided into about 42 nomes. According to Sethe, the unification of the land was initiated by the South, whereas H. Kees, citing the cultural superiority of the North, believes that it was effected precisely by Lower Egypt. The centres of Upper Egypt were the cities of Nekhen and Nekheb (el-Kab), and of Lower Egypt, Pe and Dep, or Buto. Of the monuments from c. Dynasty I, a ceremonial slate palette for grinding cosmetics, which belonged to the pharaoh "Narmer," is particularly well known. It was discovered at Hierakonpolis and could be classified as a royal manifesto. Today the Palette of "Narmer" is at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

Since on the obverse the pharaoh is shown wearing the *Deshret*, the Red Crown of the Delta, of the cities of Buto and Sais (later identifying the ruler as King of Lower Egypt), and on the reverse a *Hedjet*, the White Crown of Aphroditopolis, it was logical to presume that the pharaoh on the slate palette is the unifier of the "Two Lands" (southern and northern Egypt); and since later records cite Menes as the first Egyptian king, it was entirely logical for "Narmer" to be identified with Menes. This presumption, however, contravenes the known facts. No written records ascribe the union of the two Egypts to Menes!

The political unification effected by Menes is the fruit of a rather emotional misinterpretation of the sources by 19th century Egyptologists, eventually accepted as nothing short of a "textbook truth." On the other hand, the name "Narmer" is unknown to Egyptian chronological tradition in the age of the First Dynasty. Consequently, this Egyptian king dates from the pre-chronological age.

The controversial issue of whether there were two kingdoms before the First Dynasty cannot be resolved by archaeological means. Excavations confirm the ancient origins of the southern centre, even though the walls of the city of el-Kab date precisely from the First Dynasty. The ancient origins of the northern centre, however, cannot be proved by archae-

ology. Excavations in the area of Buto provide no evidence whatsoever about the period before the first millennium B.C.

The collection of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford includes a large black-topped potsherd from the later Naqada I period (c. 4300-4000 B.C. according to an Ashmolean publication), from Naqada, grave 1610. The jar is decorated in relief with the Red Crown, later associated with Lower (northern) Egypt! Pyramid texts also mention the Lower Egyptian king.

The uppermost line of the Palermo Stone features names of kings wearing the Crown of the North. Certain scholars think that the list of Lower Egyptian kings may have been preceded by a list of kings of Upper, i.e. southern, Egypt; for the time being, at least, this hypothesis has not been substantiated.

However, the first line of the fragments of chronological records from the age of the Old Kingdom, now at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, show at least six predynastic kings already wearing the crowns of both Upper and Lower Egypt. Among the last predynastic kings who claimed both crowns and who ruled Egypt on the eve of the First Dynasty, are "Scorpion," Horus-Ka (Double), as well as the aforementioned "Narmer." The oldest known dated monuments, i.e. monuments containing the name of the king, belong to them. It is not clear to what extent the depiction of the crowns may be assumed to attest the existence of Upper and Lower Egypt. In history, the Egyptian kings appear either with the Red Crown of the North or the White Crown of the South and, of course, with the Red-White (the White placed in the Red) or Double Crown of united Egypt. This practice existed throughout written Egyptian history.

The most important and irrefutable fact in the dispute over the possible existence of the two Egypts is the depiction of one of the features of Egyptian statehood on the Naqada I potsherd. The ubiquitous primacy of the South could be attributed to the central role of the Nile in the Egyptian Cosmos. For such an amphibious civilization, the River is Life and Movement, and it perpetually flows from Upper Egypt to Lower Egypt. Ultimately, science still lacks proof of the existence of the two Egypts, as well as of the subjugation of one by the other.

Egyptology classifies the kings who ruled all of Egypt in the period immediately before the First Dynasty (i.e. "Scorpion," Horus-Ka, "Narmer" and their predecessors) in the so-called "Zero" Dynasty. Political and religious life at that time must have been concentrated in the area around Hierakonpolis. That is precisely where the most important finds characterizing this age have been found.

The first protodynastic murals are from the tomb of the chief at Hierakonpolis. Fragments from them are now at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. They probably depict a funerary procession of boats, hunting scenes and wrestling warriors. Separate scenes, however, are scattered rather arbitrarily on the wall. There is no ground band. All figures are turned in the same direction. Two groups stand out in the lower part of the scene. Specialists think that one of them is heraldic: a human figure with a lion rampant on each side. The second group comprises five figures of goats in a circle.

Another typical monument of the age, the Palette of "Narmer," attests the ultimate development of the typical relief canon. The artists have already mastered the portrayal of figures in relief: the human face is shown in profile, but the eye and shoulders, frontally, the lower part of the body in three-quarter view as a transition to the legs in profile. There is no third dimension.

The monuments of the kings of the Zero Dynasty show that Egyptian rulers were associated with the god Horus even at that time. Hence one of the names of the king - that of his Double (Ka). This is the first name of the king, his "Horus" name which, to quote O. D. Berlev, designates his "Double" (Ka).

The god Horus himself was a sky-king, the particular king himself and a falcon-god. To quote R. Anthes, an expert in Egyptian mythology, Horus appears to be a genuine triad. The god Horus is a celestial body - a star or sun. At the same time, he is "sky Horus," "king of the skies," "king of the gods," "the sole one"!

According to Anthes, the concept of a universal and eternal god, and of the trinity of this god had already emerged by *c*. 3000 B.C.

#### Chapter Two

### FIRST HISTORICAL KINGDOM

Archaic Egypt several centuriesc. 3000 B.C.

The written records on the founder of the First Dynasty of Archaic Egypt may be divided into two types: monuments recorded by Egyptians in the Egyptian language and records of later legends in the works of the classical authors. Among the latter, the Hellenized Egyptian priest Manetho stands out. Even though he reproduced later legends too, Manetho based his history foremost on evidence drawn from original Egyptian sources. Paraphrasing the French Egyptologist G. Maspero, we might say that if the Egyptian inscriptions and Manetho recorded what was being said in the Palace, the classical writers recorded what was being said by the common folk.

The original Egyptian monuments from the early period in the history of Archaic Egypt offer little if any evidence. By rule, they document only the name of the king without expounding on his activity. The ancient authors, for their part, are more loquacious but, often, controversial too. Still, all are unanimous on one point. The first king of Dynasty I is Men (the Greek form of the name is Menes or Mina). And another thing: he and his successors came from Thinis, not far from Abydos, the site of the tombs of all kings of the First Dynasty and of several of the Second. Here are fragments from Manetho's history of this great Egyptian ruler in Africanus (A), Syncellus (S) and Eusebius (E).

M A << After the spirits of the Dead, the Demigods, the first dynasty comprises eight kings, the first one of them being Menes of This, who reigned 62 years. He died torn to pieces by a hippopotamus>>.

M S << After the spirits of the Dead and the Demigods, the first dynasty comprises eight kings, the first one of them being Menes, who ruled among them quite remarkably. Starting with him, we shall describe the line of kings, in which succession was as follows:

Menes of This and his seven successors (elsewhere 17), whom Herodotus calls Men, reigned 60 years. He went on a military campaign abroad and was considered quite famous. [He died] carried off by a hippopotamus>>.

M E <<After the spirits of the Dead and the Demigods, eight kings comprised the First Dynasty, the first among them being Menes, quite powerful in conducting royal affairs, from whom at the beginning we have assiduously drawn the families of the rulers one by one, whose consecutive succession is as follows:

Menes of This and his seven successors. [Herodotus calls him Min]. He reigned 30 years. He too led an army far beyond his kingdom and distinguished himself in glorious exploits. He died, abducted by a hippopotamus-god (?)>>.

The Abydos List of Kings and the Turin Canon, written centuries after Archaic Egypt, also identify Men as the first Egyptian king. Nor do the Graeco-Roman writers question the primacy of Men.

There seems to be a single known monument from the early Dynasty I on which Men could be interpreted as the name of a king. This is a tablet of ivory found by J. de Morgan in the tomb of Queen Neithhotep in Naqada at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The name of the Ka - Horus-Aha (literally, Horus-Warrior) is written in the first register. The next group of signs stands for the phrase "Nebtj" ("The Two Ladies"), i.e. the principal goddesses of the South and the North. "The Two Ladies"

are part of the official titulary of the Egyptian kings and, notably, in Dynasty I the proper name of the king usually came after them. This was first established by K. Sethe. And indeed, "The Two Ladies" are followed by the sign for a draught board: Men! Further proof of the identity of Horus-Aha, familiar from the monuments of the early First Dynasty, and Men from the later chronological tradition, can be found in the area of Memphis.

Herodotus writes that Men founded Memphis or, as he himself notes, the city that preceded Memphis. In this connection, let us recall that according to Herodotus, precisely Men founded the temple to Hephaestus (i.e. Ptah) at Memphis.

The largest necropolises have been found around Memphis, and the capital of Archaic Egypt is very likely to have been in this area. The earliest known tomb of an Egyptian noble is from the age of Horus-Aha. Some scholars even think that this earliest *mastaba*-tomb might have belonged to him. That is what the original sources attest, and they tip the scales in favour of the hypothesis that Horus-Aha was identical with Men. The full royal titulary of the first king of Dynasty I, as written on the Naqada tablet of ivory, ought to be read as follows:

"Horus-Aha, Nebtj, Men"

Egyptian chronology starts with the king whose Double (Ka) as god Horus was Horus-Aha, and whose proper name was Men (Menes, Mina). That is why Horus-Aha, Men, is remembered by the Egyptians as the first Egyptian king, even though he was preceded by a whole line of kings (including prominent rulers such as "Scorpion," Horus-Aha and "Narmer"). Incidentally, the last name has been misread, in contravention of tradition according to which the names of kings had a single component only until the middle of the First Dynasty. As Y.Y. Perepyolkin has proved, it is made up of two names: Nar (literally, Sheat-Fish), the name of the king's Double (the god Horus), and his proper name, Mer.

This fact is of momentous significance since it establishes the proper name of the ruler, which is not Men. In other words, the attempts to identify "Narmer" with Men (Menes, Mina) are in contradiction with the sources.

Thus chronology starts from Horus-Aha, Men. In the First Dynasty, each year is given by reference to some milestone event in the king's reign: ascension to the throne, first victory over the East, etc., followed by a reference to the flood of the Nile. Starting from the Second Dynasty, the Egyptians proceeded to date events in a two-year cycle, as in the case of the count of cattle, done once every two years. If they had to record an odd year, they dated it as follows: << Year after the N counting of all oxen>>, etc. This system survived right until the end of the Old Kingdom - in the First Intermediate Period that followed, the state disintegrated into separate units, and that meant the end of the centralized chronological system. Local nomarchs started computing the years with reference to their own reign. With the rise of the Middle Kingdom, the classical chronological system was established, surviving right until the end of Egyptian history. Dates are referred to the years of the reign of each Egyptian sovereign: << Year 1, third month of year N [season], of Pharaoh N>>. This was applied from the first to the last year of the reign of each king, after which the cycle started all over again, "year 1....," etc. No single era in chronology has been established.

Horus-Aha built "The White Wall," the city that preceded Memphis. His name is also associated with the construction of a temple to the god Ptah in the new capital.

Introduction of chronology, construction of "The White Wall" and the temple to Ptah are the most important achievements of this great Egyptian king during his almost 50-year reign which laid the groundwork for the wonder that was ancient Egypt.

The contemporary name of the country comes from the Ancient Greek Aigyptos, the Greek name of Het-Ka-Ptah (Hi-ku-

pta). This was the name of the main temple to Ptah at Memphis, translated as "Home of the Double of Ptah." Memphis itself survived political turmoil and remained a centre closely associated with the Egyptian concept of the king and his power, as a holy site of coronations and anniversary celebrations even when it was no longer capital city. Ultimately Memphis, similar to the primordial mound that arose from the chaos, is the first bedrock of Egyptian written history. A huge intellectual potential is embodied in the construction of the temple to Ptah. At some point in the primary darkness of time, on the border between the fourth and third millennium B.C., it was proclaimed to the four cardinal points that Thought and Word were at the core of creation. According to the Memphis theological treatise, recorded later, the god Ptah, with the cult of whom Men and his Court were closely associated, created the world, the gods, the cities, things, all creatures, their male and female doubles, initially conceiving and naming them in his heart and then uttering their names aloud by means of the tongue. The text of Memphis theology has survived in a late copy from c. 700 B.C., but the language of the inscription indicates that the text goes back to c. 2500 B.C. In recent years, it has been suggested that this text was actually written much later - at the end of, or even after the New Kingdom.

The worship of Ptah by Horus-Aha, Men and his Court attests to the intellectual might of the Egyptian ruling circles at the dawn of written history. Ultimately, by laying the foundations of Egyptian chronology, Men was apparently the first sovereign to conceptualize the laws of life, venturing to declare that time begins with him. This act is yet to be analyzed and assessed.

Some Egyptologists believe that Men may have built the temple to the goddess Neith in Sais. If we believe Plato's story, the legend of Atlantis must have started from there. Men celebrated the festivals of Anubis and Sokar and, of course, the jubilee of his own reign, the Sed Festival. He waged wars on

Egypt's southern and western neighbours: the tribes of ancient Nubia and Libya. The Palermo Stone mentions ships, which might refer to the establishment of trade with the Syro-Palestinian region. He built two tombs: one in Saqqara and the other, the traditional *mastaba*-tomb in Abydos. The tomb of his wife, Queen Neithhotep ("May <the goddess> Neith be appeased") has been excavated in Naqada.

Most kings of Archaic Egypt built two tombs each: one in the capital city's necropolis, the other in Abydos. The tomb of Men's successor in Abydos was later assumed to be the burial place of Osiris. Over the millennia, Egyptians from all over the land would come here to pay homage to Osiris. The motives for building two tombs have not been explained yet. Presumably, there was a custom of building a genuine tomb and a cenotaph. W.B. Emery, who excavated Archaic Egypt for years, believed that the tomb in the capital city's necropolis and the tomb in Abydos were associated with the desire for the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. By tradition, Egyptology regards the history of Archaic Egypt as a struggle for the ultimate subjugation of the North by the South and for the assertion of strong central authority. This approach ensues from K. Sethe's hypothesis. The monuments doubtless suggest some sort of internal political tensions, which escalated in certain years - yet political struggle, the struggle for power is, after all, an integral part of history!

After Men, the Double of the king as Horus on earth was Djer, whose proper name was Iti. Djer's military campaign in Nubia penetrated far into Wadi Halfa. His armies marched to Libya and, probably, Sinai. In later times, his tomb in Abydos was considered the burial place of Osiris himself, which has prompted speculation that Djer might have even been the historical prototype of Osiris. He is the first Egyptian king to be buried with his retinue. The tombs of his courtiers are linked with the royal tomb similarly to later royal necropolises. This is the earliest known case of royal acknowledgment

of the funerary needs of the king's retinue. The finds from the private tombs show that Egypt was flourishing in that period. According to E. Drioton, J. Vandier and, later, N.A. Grimal, the Egyptians may have invented the solar calendar precisely in Djer's reign. If we assume that the name of his successor is written ideographically only, he is "Serpent," Djet or Wadjit. He mounted a military campaign to the Red Sea. His target were probably the mines in the Eastern Desert.

The fourth representative of the dynasty, Den (Udimu), undertook an "Asiatic" campaign to the Near East even in the first year of his reign, from where he brought an entire harem of female captives. His activity in the east included a military campaign to Sinai.

He curtailed the power of the nobility. Den is the first Egyptian sovereign to add a third name to his Horus and proper name: Khasti ("stranger"; "man from the desert"; Usephais in Manetho's history) and the title "nj-sw - bjt" (jnsjbja), which has traditionally been translated as "King of Upper and Lower Egypt" ever since the Rosetta Stone was deciphered. However, the translation proposed by Y.Y. Perepyolkin is more accurate: "King and Lord."

According to the Palermo Stone, a census was conducted in Egypt during his reign. The feasts of Atum and the bull Apis were celebrated. This period is characterized by extensive building of fortresses. Den instituted the office of "Chancellor of the King of Lower Egypt" in order to solidify his power in the northern part of the land. On the other hand, the new Asiatic orientation of policies demanded a strong arm in the North, since that was where the armies gathered to prepare for an invasion eastwards. The first and long-serving "Chancellor of the King of Lower Egypt" was Hemaka, of whose rule there is considerable evidence. His tomb has been excavated in Saqqara. The finds offer rich information about the Sed Festival of his sovereign, Den, as well as the earliest evidence of a mummy. Further evidence of mummification

would appear at a later period. Traces of the use of stone in masonry have been found in Den's tomb in Abydos, the first known case in Egyptian history: the floor of the tomb is granite.

Den is the earliest known Egyptian sovereign shown on monuments wearing the Double Crown of Egypt. In his almost 50-year reign, he splendidly implemented the programme which he formulated in his name, adopting the title of "nj-sw - bjt," "King of Upper and Lower Egypt," "King and Lord." The very name "Den" means "[falcon with] outstretched wings and talons."

His successor Anedjib was quite advanced in age when he ascended the Egyptian throne. His name as King of Upper and Lower Egypt is Merpubia, or Miebis in Manetho's history. He is the first Egyptian king to include in his titulary "Nebwj," literally "The Two Lords" or "The Lordly Couple" (in the dual). According to the prevalent interpretation, "The Two Lords" are the gods Horus and Seth. In mythology, Seth and Horus are perpetual antagonists. Seth embodied violence and disorder. The antagonistic deities of the South and the North were thus reconciled in the person of the Egyptian king. Anedjib obviously tried to pursue a policy aimed at achieving balance in the land. This makes him the first sovereign who allowed the idea of the foe of the tutelary god of Egyptian kings to be implied in the titulary. His reign bears all signs of decline. His tomb in Abydos is the poorest mastaba-tomb in the royal necropolis.

The reign of Semerkhet, who succeeded Anedjib, is marked with the struggle for power. Semerkhet must have usurped the throne. His titulary suggests an earlier career, probably as a priest. His name does not appear in the Saqqara king list. We do not know whether this was a common oversight or whether it was deliberately dropped as a sign of disrespect. Semerkhet appropriated the artifacts of his predecessor, erasing the name of Anedjib on some of them. Archaeologists have

even found a vessel in his tomb on which the name of Queen Merneith, Den's wife, was erased. We do not know what prompted Semerkhet to try and efface the memory of his predecessor of Dynasty I.

The last king of the First Dynasty is Ka'a, successor to and, probably, son of Semerkhet.

We know even less about the Second Dynasty. The Palace was associated with the eastern part of the Delta, the area of Bubastis. The new kings worshipped the goddess Bastet and the falcon-god Soped. The name of the sun-god Re appears in the name of an Egyptian king for the first time. The successor of the founder of the dynasty, Hetepsekhemwy, assumed the Horus name Reneb or Nebre (the sequence in which the signs should be read is still controversial). This probably means "Re is my Lord." This is the earliest known case which shows that the Sun is the falcon-god Horus and, at the same time, that the Sun and the king are identical. These are not the only changes in religion. Reneb was succeeded by Nynetjer (Nutjeren), "He who belongs to the god."

Nynetjer's successors, Weneg and Sened, are known only from inscriptions on vases in the pyramid complex of Djoser (Third Dynasty). They are also mentioned in the king lists. The absence of monuments from their own reign suggests that their power was confined to Memphis.

The kings of the Second Dynasty were quite lenient to the North. In his reign, the contemporary and successor of Sened, Peribsen, proclaimed the god Seth as his Double! This drastic substitution of Horus by Seth attests to internal political tensions in Egypt. At the very end of the dynasty, the king who significantly called himself Khasekhemwy, "arising with the Two Sceptres," as well as "the two lords are at peace in him," proclaimed both Horus and Seth as his doubles.

He is presumed to have been identical with Horus Khasekhem ("arising with the Sceptre"), who left his main monuments in Hierakonpolis. His name, however, has also been found beyond the boundaries of Egypt, as far away as Byblos. At the base of his two statues he depicted the defeat of the North. The style is similar to that of the slate Palette of "Narmer." According to one interpretation, the northerners vanquished by Horus Khasekhem, as well as by "Narmer," were not the inhabitants of the Egyptian Delta, but Egypt's northwestern Libyan neighbours. The number of the slain northerners is documented: 48,205 or 48,209.

Seth does not figure in the titulary of Horus Khasekhem. If he was identical with Khasekhemwy, then this means that by eliminating Seth during his reign, the king returned to tradition. With his extensive building programme, Horus Khasekhem was the precursor of stone masonry in the Valley. Stone was widely used in the cities of el-Kab, Hierakonpolis and Abydos. The earliest known royal stone statue is of him. He is also shown in "The Year of the Defeat of Lower Egypt" receiving the symbol of the unification of the two lands from the hawk-goddess Nekhbet, the tutelary goddess of Upper Egypt. He is wearing the Crown of Upper Egypt traditional of his policies.

Needless to say, not all Egyptologists think that he is identical with Khasekhemwy. Some believe that Horus Khasekhem was the predecessor, and others, the successor of he who is "arising with the Two Sceptres." Still, the facts in favour of their being one and the same person outweigh those against. The following logical line in politics may be discerned: sudden victory of Seth and removal of the god Horus from the royal titulary under Peribsen; attainment of balance by awarding Horus and Seth equal status under Khasekhemwy, and ultimate victory of Horus under the selfsame king, who gave up the dual number in his name since the balancing of the two gods, the two forces, was now a matter of the past, and he again had only the god Horus as his Double under the name of Khasekhem. This reconstruction, however, does not explain the reasons for the changes in the king's titulary. Whoever Ho-

rus Khasekhem might have been, his tomb in Abydos is the largest from the age of the Second Dynasty.

The last king of the Second Dynasty, Horus-Seth Khasekhemwy=Horus Khasekhem?, is the father (according to other sources, grandfather) of the great pharaoh of the early Old Kingdom, Djoser. It is not clear why Manetho split two people who were such close blood relatives by classifying them in two different dynasties.

Archaic Egypt overlaps with the Aeneolithic in Northeastern Africa. As my teacher I.V. Vinogradov appropriately notes, the early progress of the country, which was at a comparatively low level of technological development, is due foremost to the fact that the Egyptians found everything they needed in, or in immediate proximity to, the Valley itself. They extracted copper in Sinai and gold in the Eastern Desert. At that time, the Egyptians were not yet familiar with the potter's wheel. The state took constant care of the maintenance and expansion of the irrigation system in the Valley. The beginning of recorded history found the First Dynasty with a developed state apparatus, institutions and offices. Most of them were already traditional even in the First Dynasty, while others were newly instituted.

Our knowledge of social relations in the first two dynasties is fragmentary. Egypt differs from the other ancient civilizations. In the course of the country's several-thousand-year-long history, there is not even a hint of the existence of a commune and communal organization anywhere in north-eastern Africa. This is what the sources show. Attempts at proving the contrary, especially on the analogy of other centres of cultural development, are futile.

As Y.Y. Perepyolkin and I.V. Vinogradov show, there was a huge and diverse royal estate in Archaic Egypt, known as "House of the King" and "House of the Queen." It included fields, vineyards, gardens, a special office producing foods, craft workshops and shipbuilding centres. The notables and

the numerous officials got everything they needed, from the royal family. Seals of the "House of the King" and "House of the Queen" have been found not only in royal funerals, but also in the tombs of officials and dignitaries.

There is no evidence of the existence of nonroyal estates, but some scholars presume that there may have been such.

Archaic Egypt is phenomenal in many respects. In that age, aristocratic funerals differed only slightly from the royal ones. This has invited the conclusion that the nobility enjoyed great economic independence.

There are no sources of information about the main mass of the population. The funerals, however, prove that there was drastic stratification by property status.

Ultimately, the first two dynasties created all conditions for a quantum leap in the Egyptian state: the age of the Pyramid Builders.

## Chapter Three OLD KINGDOM

#### most of the third millennium B.C.

The history of the Old Kingdom overlaps with the reign of Manetho's third, fourth, fifth and sixth dynasties. The king was proclaimed to be god in the flesh even on the accession the first kings of Dynasty III. The dynasty was founded by Nebka, who is mentioned in the *Westcar* Papyrus. He was succeeded by his close kinsman (son or brother?) Djoser.

Djoser, the second king of the Old Kingdom, became the founder of an entirely new epoch. The name of his Double was associated with the mystery of divine incarnation: Netjeryhet, "God in flesh, in body," literally, "Divine of the Body." It was Djoser again who built in the Saqqara necropolis the first pyramid in the history of ancient Egypt. This was a step pyramid, still a long way from the true pyramidal form, but marked the beginning of the age of the pyramid builders. Djoser became the forerunner of the grandiose stone buildings. With its six elongated terraces, Djoser's pyramid is nothing but a six-fold stone replica of the rectangular mudbrick tomb superstructures from earlier times, known as mastaba-tombs (from the Arabic mastabah, stone bench). This stairway to the sky is about 60 m high.

He also had a mud-brick *mastaba* built for himself in Beit Khallaf. This is the first of his two royal tombs, which the pharaohs built by tradition.

Djoser worked the copper mines in Sinai. According to the priests of Isis from the Ptolemaic period, he asserted Egyptian rule far south of Elephantine. Imhotep, the best known and

venerated of all Egyptian sages, lived in Djoser's time. He is believed to have lived right until the end of the Third Dynasty, until Huni's reign. Imhotep was high priest in Heliopolis (Sun City), as well as lector-priest and chief architect. He was the architect of the first pyramid. According to New Kingdom literature, he was patron of the scribes who, before starting work, would perform in his honour libation from a libation vessel that was an integral part of their writing tools. This late tradition regards him as the most proficient of the Egyptians in magic, wisdom, medicine and architecture, as writer and maker of proverbs. The Turin Canon mentions him as son of the god Ptah. Imhotep was deified and, as a local god of Memphis, was built a temple with officiating priests in the area of the capital. The Greeks later identified him with Asklepios. The cult of Imhotep spread from the northernmost parts of the kingdom to Meroe in the south. There was a temple to Imhotep even on the island of Philae. The cult of the ancient sage outlived Egypt of the Pharaohs and even infiltrated the Arab tradition. Imhotep was probably buried in the Saqqara necropolis.

Strange as it might seem, Egyptologists know even less about the Third Dynasty than about the first two. The number and sequence of Djoser's successors is wrapped in darkness. They have left their unfinished or finished pyramids, which indicates that Djoser's pyramid complex was not an exception in the dynasty. However, they are as shadowy as their predecessors.

The veil lifts with the longer and more active reign of the founder of the Fourth Dynasty, Snofru (Sanfore). He probably descended from a minor branch of the royal family and, to carry the royal blood over to the new dynasty, he married Hetepheres, the daughter of Huni, the last king of Dynasty III. The great pharaoh reigned for approximately 24 years and, similarly to Nebka and Djoser, became a legend too. He was deified in the Middle Kingdom. Amenemhe I himself invoked

Snofru's name and authority to prove his right to the throne. Snofru is the only Egyptian king who is ascribed three pyramids. South of Saqqara, in Medium, he erected a tomb modelled on Djoser's step pyramid. In his 13th regnal year, he abandoned it and started building two new ones, of true pyramidal form, in Dahshur. During his reign, Egypt was virtually covered with new fortresses, temples and palaces. Many ships were also built. In a single military campaign in Nubia, Snofru brought back 7,000 captives and 200,000 cattle. His spoils from a similar raid in Libya included 11,000 captives and 13,100 cattle. Neither did Snofru ignore Wadi Nasb and Wadi Maghara, in the western part of the Sinai Peninsula, where Egyptian pharaohs extracted copper, turquoise and malachite from the age of Nebka to the close of the Old Kingdom. In the Middle Kingdom, the cult of Snofru was particularly popular in this part of Sinai. He sent a fleet of about 40 ships to Lebanon and Syria, to procure timber for Egypt.

According to Manetho, Snofru's successor, Khufu (Cheops in Greek), reigned 63 years, and according to the Turin Canon, 23. "Khufu" is an abbreviation of "Khnum-Khufui," "Khnum is protecting me." Ironically, the builder of the first of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Great Pyramid at Giza, is known from a miniature ivory statuette about 9 cm high. The king, wearing the Red Crown of Lower Egypt, is seated on a throne. This small figurine is at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. It was discovered by Sir Flinders Petrie in Abydos.

Khufu's pyramid at Giza was originally 146.5 m high. Approximately 2,300,000 polished blocks of stone went into this stupendous structure, whose base spanned more than five hectares. Each of its sides is aligned to face the four cardinal points. The giant stone blocks, each weighing an average 2.5 tonnes, were hewn, polished and joined with impeccable precision. The immense pressure exerted by the overlying masses of masonry on the interior rooms was diverted by means of narrow shafts, step vaults and saddle-shaped compartments.

In the passages, the giant vertical slabs were freely levered along slots in the stone. In the course of the construction of this astounding funerary edifice, the builders changed the place of the burial chamber three times, without filling in the previous rooms and passages that led to them.

A legend recorded by Herodotus goes that Khufu plunged the land into years of oppression and misery, forcing all Egyptians to work for him. Some had the inhuman task of hauling the enormous blocks of stone from the quarries in the Eastern Desert to the Nile, others loaded them on ships and delivered them to the left bank, and still others dragged them from the foot of the Libyan plateau to the building site. Thus 100,000 people toiled day by day, changing once every three months. Construction of the causeway and burial chamber took ten years, and of the pyramid itself, as many as twenty.

Today, however, we know that the pyramid was built from local limestone quarried at the very foot of the pyramid, and that only high-quality white limestone for the interior and exterior facing of the pyramid was delivered from across the Nile. A limited number of so-called "working teams," made up of permanent, skilled and specially trained labourers, were immediately involved in the construction project. Such teams were also employed in the nearby quarries. Undoubtedly, however, unskilled labourers were widely used too. In the course of the construction of the Great Pyramid, four "working teams" (*izut* in Egyptian) toiled in the quarries.

Written records on Khufu's reign are sparse. According to a graffito in Wadi Maghara, he continued Snofru's diorite-quarrying projects in Sinai and west of Abu-Simbel. A stela from his reign has survived in the Nubian desert.

This remarkable son of Snofru and Queen Hetepheres appears in a literary work from later times, a cycle of legends from the *Westcar* Papyrus which describe him as a traditional eastern despot. According to one of the legends, the king was prophesied the downfall of his dynasty and the ascendancy of

the sons of the Sun. There is information about his funerary cult from Dynasty XXVI. This sovereign of the Old Kingdom became very popular in Ptolemaic Egypt.

The Turin Canon tells us that Khufu's successor, his son Djedefre (Radjedef), reigned eight years. His reign, however, might have lasted longer. He is the first Egyptian sovereign to include "son of Re" in his titulary. His tomb is in Abu Roash, 10 km north of Giza.

Djedefre was succeeded by his brother Khafre (Chefren). Both Djedefre and Khafre are sons of Khufu, but by different mothers. Khafre reigned 25 years. The pyramid which he built at Giza is in his father's spirit. It is just several metres lower, but looks higher since it lies on higher ground. Khafre restored the necropolis in Giza, where he also built a valley temple. Scholars are inclined to see a likeness between Khafre and the Sphinx. As his predecessor, Khafre also titled himself "Son of Re."

Khafre was immediately followed by Menkaure (Mycerinus). Notably, a graffito in Wadi Hammamat from Dynasty XII asserts Djedefhor and his half-brother Baefre as Hufu's successors after Khafre. Djedefhor is traditionally known as a sage similar to Imhotep. He was a man of letters and author of proverbs. Djedefhor found the four most important chapters of the *Book of the Dead* (30 B, 64, 137 A, 148) in Hermopolis. Written records identify him as a vizier in Khufu's reign who lived right until the age of Menkaure. Many scholars see signs of internal strife among Khufu's successors.

Manetho introduces another king, Bicheris, between Khafre and Menkaure, "Stable are the Doubles of Re." This is Baefre, "Re is his [soul] Ba." Baefre and Nebka were probably one and the same person. Menkaure was succeeded by Shepseskaf, who probably completed his father's pyramid, the smallest at Giza! Shepseskaf abandoned the pyramid and built a huge coffin-like tomb in Saqqara.

The close of the Fourth Dynasty is not clear. Khufu regarded himself as another Sun. That the king was a Sun is indicated by the name of his pyramid: "Horizon [for the Egyptians, the place where the Sun touches the earth, mainly at sunrise] of Khufu." Some of his sons were given names in honour of the Sun, and Djedefre is the first known pharaoh who included "Son of Re," i.e. the Sun, in his titulary. From then on and right until the end of Egyptian history, Egyptian pharaohs would extol themselves as "sons of Re." Then all of a sudden continuity was disrupted. Shepseskaf did not only abandon the pyramid as a funerary edifice. He also dropped the title "Son of the Sun" from his name. The facts from the history of the Old Kingdom suggest a growing role of the Sun City, Heliopolis, in the country's political and religious affairs. It seems that there was an attempt to limit the new influences at the close of the Fourth Dynasty.

A legend in the *Westcar* Papyrus relates that the wife of the high priest of Re in Heliopolis conceived three sons by the Sun God himself. The three were future kings of the Fifth Dynasty, under which Heliopolis started taking precedence. On the maternal side, the new dynasty directly descended from the Fourth Dynasty. Its kings - Userkaf, Sahure, Neferirkare, Neuserre, Menkauhor, Djedkare and Wenis - built pyramids in Abu Sir and Saqqara, but those pyramids were just a pale copy of the majestic edifices of the Fourth Royal House. The pyramids of Shepseskare and Khaneferre have apparently not been discovered. All that has survived of the pyramids of the Fifth Dynasty are mounds of debris, and even the highest pyramid of the dynasty is less than half the height of the great pyramids at Giza.

The sun temples built by almost all kings of the dynasty, were a novelty in Egypt. They were erected not only in honour of the Sun, but also in honour of the king. The temple of Neuserre, for instance, was dedicated to his 30<sup>th</sup> jubilee on the throne, the Sed Festival.

Coming to the throne, Userkaf proclaimed the new ideas in the name of his Double. Assuming the name "Iri-Ma'at, he indicated that while he was king, Ma'at, i.e. Order in the Cosmos and Society, would reign supreme. This Egyptian king launched a remarkable building programme in Upper Egypt. An inscribed stone vessel from Userkaf's funerary temple has been found in Cythera. This is the earliest documented case of contacts with that region.

The Egyptians retained their influence in Sinai and Nubia. Sahure and Neuserre raided Libya, from where they brought many captives. During Sahure's reign, many ships delivered inhabitants of Canaan. Sahure is the first king known to have sent an expedition to the fabled land of Punt somewhere on the southern coast of the Red Sea.

Trade with the northern Mediterranean during the Fifth Dynasty is associated with the name of Sahure, found in Dorak, and with those of Menkauhor and Djedkare-Isesi, in the vicinity of the region.

There was a notable change of policy under Isesi. His name as King of Upper and Lower Egypt is Djedkare, "Stable is the Double of Re." He placed himself under the protection of Re but did not build a sun temple. Besides, he erected a tomb in southern Saqqara, near Memphis. Manetho credits him with a 40-year reign, and the Turin Canon, with just 28 years. He sent an expedition to the Land of God too, which brought back a dwarf. His expedition to Punt was remembered right until the age of Merenre. Contacts with Byblos are also documented.

In the reign of Wenis (Onnos), which marked the end of the classical age of the Old Kingdom, there was a military engagement with Canaan.

The Sixth Dynasty marks the beginning of the end, ushering in and clearing the way for the grim years of the First Intermediate Period. All that has remained of its reign are memories of turbulent times. The founder of the dynasty fell victim to a conspiracy, and court trials are also on record in the age of

Piopi I. Merenre, apparently fearing a conspiracy, proclaimed his younger brother Piopi II coregent. Piopi II is famous for remaining on the throne almost 100 years. According to the Turin Canon and Manetho, he reigned for 94 years. This is the longest reign on record in world history.

Among the last sovereigns, Queen Nitocris stands out, but we know practically nothing about the decline of the dynasty.

Magnificent samples of the autobiographical genre have survived from the Sixth Dynasty: the biography of Weni, who served the first three kings of the dynasty, and the biography of Harkhuf from the end of the period. Autobiography is the earliest and best documented literary genre in ancient Egypt.

At the close of the Old Kingdom, the governors of Upper Egypt, who lived in Elephantine, became the first explorers of Africa, accomplishing missions on the orders of their king. They conducted permanent expeditions that penetrated far into southern Africa.

Under the Sixth Dynasty, Egypt's belligerence to the neighbours intensified. So did contacts with Byblos. An official in Elephantine writes that he had sailed to Byblos and Punt eleven times.

Egypt thus acquired its unique character during the Old Kingdom. The king was proclaimed to be god "in the flesh." Pyramids were built, the royal titulary acquired its final form with the addition of the fifth name of the king, "Son of Re," the sovereigns built sun temples, and Egyptian ships sailed across the Red Sea and the eastern Mediterranean. Yet something else happened too - something without which Egypt would not have been Egypt. At the end of the Fifth Dynasty, a fundamental work in Egyptian religion was recorded. Texts appeared on the interior walls of the pyramid of Wenis! Thus a pyramid which one would hardly notice on the outside (it is just 50 m high) became a unique funerary edifice.

Pyramid Texts were inscribed throughout the Sixth Dynasty and perhaps even later, until the end of the Eighth Dynasty

(from which a single pyramid has survived). We know of nine such pyramids: six of kings and three of queens. The sentences in this compendium were formed at different times and under the influence of different religious systems, among which the Heliopolitan stands out. The *Pyramid Texts* recount the journey of the pharaoh after death, and they were intended to protect a dead king and ensure life and sustenance in the hereafter. The *Pyramid Texts* constitute the oldest extant body of religious texts in human history.

Their hieroglyphs are blue-green. Their purpose was to make sure that the Ba of the dead king ascended the sky, joined the retinue of the sun god and, probably, assimilated with the Lord of Everything. Along with the omnipresent influence of the Heliopolitan Sun God, the *Pyramid Texts* give increasing prominence to another deity too: Osiris. They resolve the issue of the death of the king and the ascendancy of his successor. According to the texts, at death the king becomes Osiris and his son, Horus. In the treatise *Hieroglyphica*, the priest Horapolo translates "Ba" as "soul." The *Pyramid Texts* ascribe a Ba to the gods and the king. The *Coffin Texts* from the Middle Kingdom show that the other Egyptians - or at least those who could afford such a coffin (sarcophagus) - had a Ba too. By the time of the New Kingdom, all Egyptians had a Ba.

The *Pyramid Texts* are the basis of the famous *Book of the Dead*.

The ancient inhabitants of the Valley gave exceptional prominence to the afterworld. Herodotus identifies them as the most devout believers of all peoples.

The Egyptian concept of the "Ka" ("Double") is associated with the notions of the hereafter. To the ancient Egyptians, the afterworld was the world of images, of depictions, in the tombs. The image was seen as the "Ka" ("Double") of Man and vice versa. The "Ka" was that aspect of the human person which could be depicted by artistic devices.

According to O. D. Berlev the ancient Egyptians believed that there were two parallel "afterworlds": "The World of Images" and "the World of the Dead Body." Those two worlds were created by Man. There was nothing supernatural in the former, which could therefore be depicted; being supernatural, the latter could not be depicted but was described in the mortuary texts. The two worlds became effective not upon a person's death, but immediately upon the creation of the representations or texts devoted to the respective person.

The category of "Name" was closely related to the "Ka." A person lived as long as his "Name" was alive, even after the destruction of the world of "Ka." The "Name" was immortalized or destroyed depending on the attitude of royal authority to its bearer. Certain cases may probably be regarded as an attempt to buy immortality of the "Name." One, but very important, aspect of the "world" of the "Name" was in the Valley, i.e. it was effective within the boundaries of Egypt only. The "Name" could also be immortalized while its bearer was still alive.

Tomb reliefs and representations are the main source of information about the Old Kingdom. Strangely enough, we do not have rich archaeological evidence on the age. Due to the distinct aspiration towards continuing life on earth in the hereafter, tomb representations depict the life of the tomb owner in minute detail. Incidentally, the hereafter is in the underworld. It is a mirror reflection of this world, but people there are upside down. The main distinctive feature of the underworld is the absence of light. The sky of this and the underworld was presumably full of water.

The intricate layout of tombs offers an insight into social relations in the period. *Peru Djet*, the house of the noble, and the issue of ownership in Egypt have been studied best. This is the first private estate on record. Fewer sources are extant about the royal and temple estates. Egyptology owes the study of this complicated matter to Y.Y. Perepyolkin.

Thus the *peru djet* of the noble comprises a principal estate and numerous holdings across the land, managed by the "overseer."

The Old Kingdom considered ship organization the ideal form of organizing masses of people. That is why the main unit both in the fleet and on land - be it in the field, in construction, etc. - was the so-called "izut," i.e. "crew," which Egyptologists conventionally translate as "working team" when referring to operations on land. Notably, "crews" working in the field were divided into those at the bow, at the stern, left and right on board, etc.

The crafts in the *peru djet* were concentrated in the general craft workshops, "pavilion of craftsmen": only men were employed. The women were assigned to the weaving workshops. There was a special office producing food. Several people were employed in producing a single item at various stages of production. None of the labourers at the *peru djet* owned the means of production. At the same time, they got everything they needed from the *peru djet* storehouses.

Against this background, a representation of a market-place in which peru djet labourers are exchanging small amounts of commodities is quite puzzling. Presumably, there was a production target and labourers seem to have had the right to produce anything above that; the surplus was regarded as their private property and they were entitled to sell it on the market. The royal and temple estates were presumably organized on the same basis.

The monuments show that the *peru djet* of the noble was "external" in regard to the "internal" royal estate. The *peru djet* was made up of property and land inherited from the parents, and "bequeathed" or purchased property. The noble was free to dispose of all that however he deemed fit. Perhaps he set aside funds for his mortuary cult precisely from the *peru djet*. All that was considered his property "by virtue of truth." The noble also had property "by virtue of office," which he re-

ceived when he was appointed to the respective office and which could be taken away if he fell from favour. The noble could not sell or exchange the property to which he was entitled in his official capacity. By rule, offices in Egypt were hereditary and the king only endorsed the succession of the son to his father's office. Private property thus intertwined with the property that belonged to the respective office. Notably, the noble's prosperity in Egypt depended foremost on the latter.

"Djet" means both full ownership and official ownership or tenure.

There are hardly any sources of information about small and medium-sized estates from that time.

The issue of slavery in Egypt is very complicated. The term "baku" is on record even in Archaic Egypt. The mechanism of enslavement is not clear. There were some foreigners among the slaves, but the majority of them were Egyptians. Nobles from the close of the Old Kingdom boast that they have never enslaved a single Egyptian in their life-time. Enslavement of Egyptians is documented at the end of the Old Kingdom, when the process of decentralization became uncontrollable. There could have hardly been debt slavery, because of the selfcontained estates of the peru djet type. The latter obviously impeded the development of monetary relations. There may have been a slave market in Old Kingdom Egypt. Slavery, however, was not typical of the age. (Y.Y. Perepyolkin's conclusions are expounded in a thorough and comprehensive way by my teacher I.V. Vinogradov in "Ranneye i Drevneye tsarstva v Egipte," in Istoriya drevnego mira, vol. I. Moscow, 1982).

According to O. D. Berlev in the ancient Egyptian doctrine of kingship, the king was invariably god and his flesh - divine. There is not even a hint of anything human in him. Since he was conceived by the Sun God, the king himself is the Sun by birth. In Ancient Egypt, divine flesh was regarded as solid

gold, therefore the king was not just Horus on earth. He was Horus of gold! Still, there was a difference between this god and the god from whom he descended. "Netjer-a'a" is the great, elder god, and "Netjer-Nefer" is the king, i.e. younger god.

I believe that Netjer-Nefer means manifested, pronounced god. Manifested, however, in divine flesh!

The king's right-hand man was the vizier, *tjaty*, the supreme legal authority after the pharaoh. He sometimes governed the capital too. However, he was seldom if ever entrusted command of the army.

The other powerful figure in administration was the commander of the army, *imi-ra-mesha*.

In the third and fourth dynasties, central government controlled the regional centres. At the same time, the high nobility in the capital comprised a narrow circle of royal kinsmen. All key offices were held by representatives of the dynasty. Things started changing in the second half of the Old Kingdom. Against the background of the decline of pyramid building, the tombs of the Upper Egyptian nomarchs started increasing in splendour.

The nomarchs, however, were not high nobility even in the Sixth Dynasty. The huge stone tombs of the capital city's notables, richly decorated with reliefs and inscriptions, cannot compare to the considerably smaller rock-cut and sometimes quite poor tombs of the local nobility.

Perhaps the increasing authority of the Upper Egyptian nomarchs ultimately led to the kingdom's fragmentation into semi-independent regions. Still, the exact circumstances of the fall of the Old Kingdom are not known.

## Chapter Four

## FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

about two centuries before the end of the third mille nium B.C.

The collapse of central authority at the end of the Old Kingdom and the growing power of the nomarchs and local nobility coincided with drastic changes in the climate of eastern Africa. The wet period, which had started even in the Neolithic, was over by the end of the third millennium B.C.

The first omen of chaos and despair is to be found in the pyramid of Wenis, where there are scenes of suffering and famine. The waters of the Nile fell considerably as a result of the changes in monsoons in the region of the Abyssinian plateau. The climatic change brought hot southern winds. Under the circumstances, Egypt's unique irrigation system proved powerless to cope with the desiccation and famine. The notorious case of cannibalism could be dated from that period, along with the evidence of groups of starved people marauding the once rich regions. According to the Egyptians, the Nile was so shallow that people could easily wade across the river.

The years of transition from the Old to the Middle Kingdom saw incursions by "Asiatics" in the region of the Delta. By rule, this part of the land, similar to the story in the Old Testament, was frequently invaded by hostile tribes in quest of pastures for their flocks.

The First Intermediate Period, which conventionally covers the reign of the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth dynasties, could be divided into two stages: Stage One, the seventh and eighth dynasties which directly descended from the Old Kingdom; and Stage Two, the ninth and tenth dynasties, under which Egypt radically departed from the Old Kingdom tradition.

The capitals of the Valley in the First Intermediate Period were Memphis, Heracleopolis and Thebes. Memphis remained the largest city in Egypt, the administrative and military centre. *Instruction for Merikare* notes that the army in Memphis was 10,000-strong.

The centralized state of the Old Kingdom disintegrated into powerless dynasties, semi-independent nomes and more than one kingdoms in the Valley.

Manetho mentions in his history that the Seventh Dynasty included seventy kings who reigned for seventy days. It is not clear whether this was a metaphor of the helplessness of its short-lived kings. Many scholars see this as a sign of brutal and violent strife in the Palace. Others believe that Manetho was referring to the seventy constructive forces in Heliopolitan cosmogony.

The next, Eighth, Dynasty was also Memphis-based, Manetho writes, but some Egyptologists think that its authority was confined mostly to Upper Egypt. This dynasty probably ruled concurrently with the ninth, tenth and, partly, the eleventh dynasties.

Notably, in the ancient Egyptian concept, the end of the Eighth Dynasty saw a disruption in the blood relationship between the Egyptian kings and the divine dynasty. This tragic end is to be discerned in the records on the age.

Stage Two of the First Intermediate Period (Ninth and Tenth Dynasty) was turbulent and riddled with violence. Heracleopolis is in the northern part of Upper Egypt, and that was precisely where the ninth and tenth dynasties hailed from. The founder of the dynasty, Khety (Achtoes), was infamous right until the age of Manetho. The drastic measures which he introduced in government failed to help either him

or his successors enforce their authority across the Valley. The Ninth Dynasty achieved a measure of success when it succeeded in conquering Lower Egypt and Thinis to the south. However, that was as far south as it could go, since another kingdom had been established there. In *Instruction* [of a Heracleopolitan King] *for* [His Son] *Merikare*, the old and experienced king advises his successor to live in peace with the southern kingdom. The author of this text is perhaps Khety III, who is known to have been Merikare's predecessor.

The southern kingdom was based in the Theban region and subjugated southern Egypt as far as Elephantine. The Theban nomarchs founded the Eleventh Theban Dynasty, which eventually became all-Egyptian. War between the two kingdoms was inevitable and was waged with mixed success.

The Heracleopolitan kingdom was made up of semiindependent nomes, with the nomarchs rivalling the Heracleopolitan kings themselves. The Theban kingdom was a strong, centralized state. At the same time, the South had a larger economic potential.

The clash between Heracleopolis and Thebes was ultimately won by Thebes, and the last kings of the Eleventh Dynasty, the Mentuhotpes, reigned over a reunited Egypt.

Two works of Egyptian literature, known from later copies, describe the awful years of the First Intermediate Period: *Instruction of Ipuwer* and *Prophecies of Neferti*. By genre, both are close to prophetic or messianic literature.

The first literary piece written by a king in Egyptian history dates from that period too: *Instruction for Merikare*.

The fall of the Heracleopolitan dynasty and the unification of the land by Nebhepetre Mentuhotpe brought the violent First Intermediate Period to an end.

Hieroglyphic inscription. Stela of Senwosre III from Semna. Middle Kingdom, Dynasty XII.

## Chapter Five MIDDLE KINGDOM

The unifier of the land, Nebhepetre Mentuhotpe restored the old offices and institutions, and instituted the office of "Governor of the North"; a vizier, *tjaty*, was reappointed.

In foreign policy, Nebhepetre Mentuhotpe strove to reassert Old Kingdom Egyptian authority. He mounted military campaigns against the Tjehenu and the Tjemehu in Libya, and against the nomadic tribe Mentiu in Sinai. Defending his frontiers, he pursued the "Asiatics" as far away as the River Litani. In Nubia, he aspired to win back the territories ruled by the Sixth Dynasty. His Governor of the southern countries was Khety, who conducted a series of campaigns extending Egyptian influence to the land of Wawat, bordered by the Nile and the Red Sea, from the heights of Aswan to the north to Wadi Korosko to the south. There are traces of Egyptian penetration as far south as the Second Cataract of the Nile.

This first all-Egyptian sovereign after Piopi II, who pursued a policy of restoring Old Kingdom Egypt, even emulated the Old Egyptian tomb complexes in his resting place. In Deir el Bahari, he built a unique funerary complex, a combination of a mortuary temple, pyramid and rock-cut tomb of the Upper Egyptian type. The unification of the country created conditions for a new flowering of stone masonry.

The aspiration towards restoring the Old Kingdom or, perhaps, the desire to legitimize their authority, prompted the kings of the Eleventh Dynasty to settle in the all-Egyptian capital of Memphis. Their home town of Thebes also became

one of the capitals of the land. The Mentuhotpes were buried precisely in Thebes.

In his eighth regnal year the successive Mentuhotpe sent an expedition headed by Henenu (Henu), which dug 12 wells along the road from Coptos to Wadi Gasus, thus ensuring a regular water supply for future campaigns between the Valley and the Red Sea. On the coast of the Red Sea Henenu built a ship which sailed to Punt. We know that this expedition was successful, bringing home exotic cargo from the land along the southern coast of the Red Sea.

The last of the Mentuhotpes had a certain vizier called Amenemhe. In all likelihood, this was the great pharaoh who, after the death of the latest king of the Eleventh Dynasty, founded Dynasty XII: the Classical Age in the history of Egypt.

The Middle Kingdom is a special period in Egyptian history. It divides two radically different, two opposite civilizations: the Old Kingdom and the Egyptian "Empire," or the age of the New Kingdom. A series of Old Egyptian elements were still alive in the Middle Kingdom. The pharaohs themselves pursued a consistent policy of restoring the Old Kingdom. However, a new age was in the making.

The Middle Kingdom inherited the legacy of the First Intermediate Period: a state in shambles, an untended irrigation system and unprecedented independence of the nomarchs who had virtually become local princelings. They identified as sons of the local deity similarly to the king, who was the son of the Sun, and kept chronological records on the basis of their own years in power as governors. Even the powerful kings of Dynasty XII failed to curtail the authority of the nomarchs.

The authority of the nomarch was hereditary. It was handed down from father to son, or from maternal grandfather to grandson. The new nomarch was appointed by royal decree. In his tomb, one nomarch depicted 59 predecessors, all of them nomarchs too. Computation of time on the basis not

only of the pharaoh's reign but also on that of the nomarch - a practice inherited from the First Intermediate Period - continued even under the great Senwosre I. The local armies were commanded by the nomarchs, whose influence and economic might continued growing right until the age of Amenemhe III. It is clear that with such a legacy, restoring the Old Kingdom was virtually impossible.

The mainstay of the Egyptian kings was the court aristocracy and the people who had succeeded in acquiring promotion on the basis of merit. They made up the "bureaucratic" aristocracy which, despite its common origins, had able people and owed its status to the benevolence of the pharaoh. Precisely this stratum supported the king in his struggles with the hereditary provincial nobility.

The frequent conspiracies and intrigues, as well as the rebellious nomes, mounted tensions in the kingdom. The kings founded an institution called *Shemsiuu*, a special army under the pharaoh. The word *shemsiu* (sing.) itself is a participle of the verb *shemes*, "to follow, to escort." In other words, the *Shemsiuu* were "followers." Most of them were commoners. The nomarchs surrounded themselves with "followers" too. The establishment of this institution was doubtless prompted by security considerations, but then there were also ideological motives. The founders of Dynasty XII considered themselves founders of a new line of kings equal to the early dynastic sovereigns. The kings of Dynasty XII, similar to the god Horus - in line with an ancient concept recorded in the *Pyramid Texts* - decided to surround themselves with *Shemsiuu* too.

Regardless of all security measures, the pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom remained paranoid, seeing conspiracies everywhere. Trials abounded.

The collapse of the Old Egyptian economic system led to a measure of economic specialization. The small and medium-sized estates did not have the economic power of the Old Kingdom *peru djet* and were no longer capable of remaining

self-contained, catering for all their needs. This boosted intensive trade among the economic units - busy trade is a distinctive feature of the Middle Kingdom.

By the end of the Middle Kingdom, the Egyptians were using bronze. They already knew the horse, until recently believed to have been brought to the Nile valley by the Hyksos. Archaeologists have found a horse skeleton in an Egyptian fortress in Nubia. The first representation of a rooster dates from the Middle Kingdom. Such representations were rare in the next age too. No depictions of hens are extant, but birds laying eggs every day are documented in the age of Thutmose III (New Kingdom). They had been brought as a gift, and the Egyptians were astounded.

After the fall of the Old Kingdom and the disruption of the direct blood relationship with the dynasty of the gods with the collapse of Dynasty VIII, the king who considered himself the founder not only of a new dynasty, but of a new line of kings equal to the first human dynasty, was Amenemhe I, the founder of Dynasty XII. It is not clear whether the line of the Mentuhotpes dried up and power naturally passed over to the vizier Amenemhe, or whether the new king ascended the throne after a coup. A text records that Amenemhe was appointed coregent of the last king of Dynasty XI, but Egyptologists are inclined to regard this as fiction. We also know of at least another two claimants to the throne: Segerseni in Nubia and Inyotef. There is evidence of struggles between them and Amenemhe I in the first years of the latter's reign.

Ascending the throne, Amenemhe I was the first Egyptian sovereign to adopt the significant Horus name of "Uhem-Mesut," which means "he who repeats births." The new king thus stressed that he was founding a new line of kings, at the same time proclaiming an age of Renaissance. This is the first Renaissance in world history. The new king, however, did not break off with Dynasty XI. Upon coronation, he took the name of "Shatepaibre," the name borne by his predecessor Men-

tuhotpe and a name that embodied the Heliopolitan ideology. Yet the sovereign's proper name was Amenemhe, "Amun is at the head." Thus the ancient deity Amun, who was mentioned even in the Pyramid Texts but had not had a popular cult in Egypt until then, was elevated to unprecedented prominence. Amenemhe started the future all-Egyptian cult of Amun, and takes the credit for his transformation from obscure deity to tutelary god of the new capital, Thebes, and united Egypt. By the end of the Middle Kingdom and in the New Kingdom, in particular, this new god - now called Amun-Re - would play a central role in all-Egyptian life. The practice of identifying a new deity with an old one was not novel in Egypt. At that, the name of the older and more authoritative god came second. That is how Amun-Re got his name too. Incidentally, many scholars attribute this transformation to Amenemhe I, since he himself combined the names of Amenemhe and Shatepaibre, i.e. "Satisfied is the heart of Re." The god Amun himself was "The Holy One," "The Hidden One," he was "the wind" and "the air," and a text from the age of Ramesses III claims that the body of Amun is "the breath of life."

Amenemhe I, unlike the kings of Dynasty XI, did not come from Thebes. He was the son of the priest Senwosre, considered by Dynasty XVIII as the founder of the Twelfth Dynasty, and his mother was from Elephantine.

In earlier times the kings of the Fifth Dynasty had to prove their rights by a prophecy pronounced by the sage Djedi before the anxious Khufu, as we learn from the *Westcar* Papyrus. The use of literature for political purposes in ancient Egypt has been studied brilliantly by the French Egyptologist G. Posener, to whom we largely owe the analysis of the literary sources on Dynasty XII which, in turn, considered Snofru's kingdom an unattainable ideal. The prophecy of Neferti which legitimizes the authority of Amenemhe I, was pronounced precisely in Snofru's Court:

...There will be no Heliopolitan nome to be

the birth-land of every god [=king].
Then a king will come from the South.
Ameny by name [=Amenemhe I].
Son of a woman of Ta-Zety, born in Upper Egypt.
He will assume the White Crown,
He will wear the Red Crown
He will join the Double Crown.
He will please Horus and Seth
in accordance with the desire
of their heart.

The great ideologue of New Egypt reigned about 30 years. On accession, he fought with the claimants to the throne. His follower Khnumhotep I sailed with 20 ships to the south, where he confronted Segerseni in Lower Nubia. Amenemhe I sought to defend his northeastern frontier, where he built "The Walls of the Sovereign" in Wadi Tumilat. He started building in Karnak, and probably founded the temple to the goddess Mut (wife of Amun) south of the wall of Amun-Re. There are also traces of his activity in Coptos, Abydos, Denderah and Memphis.

Amenemhe I moved the residence of the Egyptian kings north of Thebes, to the fortress with the significant name of Ititaui ("Conquering the two lands"). The full name of this fortress was Amenemhe Ititaui. It was not far from Memphis, and in this aspiration towards the ancient capital it is not hard to discern the ideal of Amenemhe I: the Old Kingdom! He reorganized the administration and the nomes. In the 20th year of his reign, Amenemhe I proclaimed his son Senwosre (Senusret; Greek Sesostris) coregent. Senwosre took over the command of the army and assumed the function of royal envoy to the world. He thus inspired fear in the neighbours long before his accession.

A literary work from the Middle Kingdom, the "palace novel" *The Story of Sinuhe*, emphasizes that Amenemhe I was the conqueror of the southern lands, and his son Senwosre, of

the North. The Nubian campaign in the 23<sup>rd</sup> regnal year of Amenemhe I is the Twelfth Dynasty's first documented invasion of the south. A second military campaign was mounted in the 29<sup>th</sup> regnal year. Amenemhe I founded the Semna border fortress at the Second Cataract of the Nile.

Rock inscriptions around the southern frontier document the cruel measures which the authorities took against members of the Egyptian expeditions who committed certain offences. They date from the reign of Amenemhe I to, probably, the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> regnal year of his son Senwosre I, and are indicative of the spirit of the age. Such punishments are no longer mentioned after the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Senwosre I.

A victory over the Bedouins in Sinai in the 24<sup>th</sup> regnal year is on record too.

Amenemhe I is among the best known ideologues of Egyptian statehood. The extreme conditions in which the Egyptian state had to be rebuilt after the First Intermediate Period catalyzed the development of a unique Egyptian doctrine about the king and his subjects.

From the very dawn of Egyptian history, the king had a Double: Horus on earth. While the prince was still young, the Double inherited from god was dormant in him, and he hardly differed from other children; on accession, however, his Double "awakened" and he became Horus on earth. In the Third Dynasty, pharaoh Djoser, assuming the name of Netjeryhet, merely stressed that the Double of the Egyptian king in his capacity as Horus on earth is god in the flesh. The body, the flesh of the king differed from those of the other Egyptians precisely in that they were divine.

In the Fourth Dynasty, Khufu proclaimed himself a second Sun and, starting from his sons, each successive Egyptian king extolled himself as "Son of Re," i.e. "Son of the Sun." This title meant that the king was conceived by Re, which is explained in detail in the *Westcar* Papyrus, consequently the king of Egypt was the younger Sun. He differed from the supreme

deity mostly in his capacity as *netjer nefer*, which means "manifested, i.e. pronounced god," since he performed his mission in the world of "manifestations" - one of the distinctive features of our world!

The divine flesh, the body of the deity, has the property of dividing into parts and being distributed among as many bodies as necessary, while its integrity and power remained intact.

- As O. D. Berlev notes, "in Egyptian concepts, the king is one of the most powerful deities, and the nature of the divine body is such that the god can detach a part of himself which will function independently. This property of the divine body is at the basis of the legends of the Eye of the Sun, which the Sun sends to distant lands to perform a particular mission."
- O. D. Berlev has proved that the Egyptians sent on royal missions at the head of expeditions or military campaigns could consider themselves parts of the royal body. Thus the doctrine that under particular circumstances the subjects are part of the king's body reached its zenith around the time Amenemhe I ascended the throne (2000 B.C.). Before his accession Amenemhe I himself, being a vizier to the last Mentuhotpe, left an inscription in Wadi Hammamat, in which he compared himself to part of the body of the god, i.e. the king, which the god (the king) sends on a mission on his behalf to distant lands. In an earlier inscription on a stela which is now in Copenhagen, prince Jnj-jtu-ef emphasizes that he was not only one of the parts of the royal body, but that he was even born of the queen mother since he was part of her son's body, and that at the time of birth he belonged to the body of "the newborn royal son."
- O. D. Berlev offers a number of examples illustrating Egyptian ideology of the Classical Age.

Precisely the Egyptian doctrine of the subject as part of the body of the pharaoh can explain the puzzling passage in the famous "story" *The Island of Plenty*, where the shipwrecked

sailor promises the Serpent god things which are within the powers of the king alone. Apparently the shipwrecked sailor was acting as part of the king's body, which suggests that besides the title of "escort of the king" (shemsiu ni heka), he also had another, iri-hi-nisut which stresses that the Egyptian was part of the king's body even at birth.

This principle must have also underlain the tradition whereby the king appointed his successor as coregent even in his lifetime, with the king and his authority remaining inviolable.

Thus according to this ancient Egyptian concept, it was possible for part, if not all, of the subjects to have been in the womb of the queen mother and to have been born of her as a substantial part of the body, as organs of the royal son. The Egyptian state of the Classical Age was thus not simply a strict hierarchical pyramid, but something far more complex.

The state with its subjects was a living body, whose most important property was that it was divine since it was identical with the body of the god, i.e. of the king. The life-giving fluids of this organism pulsated in the cells of even the last subject.

In the context of this doctrine, the Twelfth Dynasty founded by Amenemhe I exercised its power for slightly more than two hundred years (2000 - 1785 B.C.). There were just eight pharaohs in that time, which is indicative of stability after the troubled First Intermediate Period and the efforts of Dynasty XI at reuniting the land.

The doctrine that the subject was a substantial part of the body of the king is at the core of the universal concept that each Egyptian was hemu, i.e. "manifestation," "form," "incarnation" of the god, i.e. the king (hemu, sing.; hemuu, pl.). The entire population of Egypt was hemuu nisut ("royal hemuu"). According to this ancient doctrine, any deity, i.e. any force, has the means of self-manifestation (self-expression), called hemu. Egyptology owes this formulation of the complicated

ancient Egyptian concept to O. D. Berlev, who dedicated his life to the study of the problem of *hemuu nisut*. The ancient Egyptian doctrine of *hemu* is at the basis of social organization in the Middle Kingdom and characterizes the entire age.

The ancient Egyptians described the organization of society and the state in theological terms, and this was apparently the only possible way in the phenomenon of the Egyptian state, which is nothing but the living body of the god, i.e. the king.

Social relations in the age of the Middle Kingdom, as a manifestation of the doctrine of *hemu*, have been studied extensively by O. D. Berlev who, to quote Y.Y. Perepyolkin, "knew the respective sources more thoroughly and comprehensively than anybody else in the world."

Today the study of Classical Egypt is simply inconceivable without extensive knowledge of O. D. Berlev's works.

Thus all Egyptians were hemuu nisut; in many cases, "royal hemu" is synonymous with Egyptian. The hemuu employed on private estates were royal and, as O. D. Berlev notes, in this context the "royal-private" antithesis becomes entirely meaningless. Work is the primary duty of hemu. Contrary to the manpower brought to Egypt from abroad, the term hemu applied to the entire population of the land made up of Egyptians only. Thus this term distinguished people of Egyptian origins from foreigners with the same or similar social status. The meaning of the term refers to the word "king." O. D. Berlev stresses that this picture does not at all fit into the general concept of ancient slavery. Presuming that hemu were foremost "slaves of the king," then they could have been the "property" of private persons in that capacity only. At the same time, this would have made only Egyptians "slaves" certainly not foreigners. Obviously the picture is radically different from that in Antiquity, and if we want to try and understand Egypt it is essential that we abandon the logic inherited from Antiquity.

The relation between *hemu*, i.e. the person who serves his master and creates his will, and the divine force which has *hemu* as a means of self-manifestation, is similar. The semantic relation between the latter *hemu* and *hemu* as a social term is quite important.

The antonym of *hemu* is *hefti*, i.e "enemy." This explains why the Egyptians so zealously worshiped evil deities along with the good ones. The evil gods were not evil - the evil was done on their behalf and against their will by their *heftiu* (pl.), their enemies, for whose actions the deities that were considered evil were not responsible.

O. D. Berlev notes that "there is a single word, a social term, which in ancient times was adapted to express the fundamental doctrine of the Egyptian outlook. The word *hemu* is used to designate the instrument of the divine force [=the king], which was wholly subordinate to the will and was imbued and propelled by this force."

In the second half of the New Kingdom, *hemu* was in opposition to *nemhuu* - free. O. D. Berlev is categorical that the notion of "free" was not familiar to the Middle Kingdom.

One might obviously be misled to assume that there mass slavery in Egypt, therefore we had best use the term *hemuu nisut* without translation or confine ourselves to "royal *hemuu." Hemu* appears in many other combinations too: *hemu netjer*, literally "*hemu* of the god," which we conventionally translate as "priest"; *hemu ka*, i.e. "*hemu* of the Double" or, translated, "priest of the Double."

Hemu nisut was the social stratum of the main producers of material wealth: all inhabitants of the Valley who were of Egyptian origins. The main duty of the "royal hemuu" was to work within the framework of a particular profession. Depending on their assignment, they worked on the royal, temple or private estates (peru djet). They were appointed even as adolescents during the annual censuses conducted on behalf of the royal administration and accompanied by assignment of

the available manpower. They were practically assigned the respective profession for life.

Hemuu nisut were not entitled to own property, they worked on estates which did not belong to them and were djet ("property," but according to the Egyptian notions!) of a particular person or estate. The hemuu nisut employed on a private estate did not belong to the owner of the peru djet but to his office, and in all cases they remained none other than "royal" hemuu. The owner of the estate did not have the right to dispose of them or their offspring. During the annual censuses, the descendants of hemuu nisut were assigned to other estates and left the peru djet on which they were born. By rule, the gifts and professional skills inherited from the parents were taken into consideration in the assignment of professions. They did not have the right to choose their own profession. The status of the different professions of labourers on the royal, temple and private estates was equal.

Slaves in the true sense of the word were the people from the social category of baku. Their number was insignificant. They were used foremost in the peru djet. Unlike hemuu nisut, they were not subject to the annual censuses, since they and their children were the full property of their owners. Baku were excluded from the professions. There was a slave market too. The difference between hemuu nisut and baku is most obvious in peru djet. Hemuu nisut belonged to the office of the estate owner and he disposed of them on the terms of the office which he held, whereas baku were his full property in the modern sense of the word.

Enslaving fellow Egyptians became possible in the First Intermediate Period. Dynasty XII, however, did everything to thwart those attempts. Presumably, this arbitrary practice was not entirely uprooted in the years of the Middle Kingdom.

Foreigners, who appeared in Egypt in large numbers after the middle of the Twelfth Dynasty, had a peculiar status. The majority of them were Asiatics captured along the northeastern frontier. Records on them were kept at the central office which oversaw the assignment of available manpower to the royal, temple and private estates. Since they did not have a particular profession, they were by rule used for odd jobs. The Egyptian golden rule was that foreigners should not work in the fields since "the Asiatics who roamed the sand" had no attitude whatsoever to agricultural labour.

Middle Egyptian sources reveal yet another important feature of the organization of Egyptian society: the so-called "royal works." The drafted workers were relieved of the everyday duties of their profession, and were housed in guarded camps in the course of several months. New tasks were assigned here. The conditions and labour were particularly grim, and there were frequent attempts at avoiding this draft.

The Story of Sinuhe seems to hint at the efforts to avoid "royal works" in the passage which tells how a man is running away without being able to send anybody (perhaps as a replacement).

The "royal works" included building and excavation, mining and quarrying, maintenance of the irrigation system, rowing, irrigation of areas below the level of natural inundation. In this period, the Egyptians did not use water-supply devices, and water was delivered manually, in vessels. Only men were drafted. The draft process was overseen by the vizier, the *tjaty*.

By their social status, the Middle Kingdom hemuu nisut are reminiscent of the Old Kingdom labourers on the three main types of estates. In Old Egypt, however, there was a closer bound between the estate and the workers. It is not clear whether the mechanism of central distribution of manpower was as powerful. And, another very important thing: in the Old Kingdom, labourers were organized in *isut* teams; in the Middle Kingdom, each farmer worked a particular individual plot of land and was personally answerable for it and for the crop!

Hemuu nisut probably survived as a social stratum in the New Kingdom too, but under a different name: semdet or "professions." In the New Kingdom, the meaning of the term hemu changed, and it came to stand for "slave" in the true sense of the word. The meaning of baku did not change in the new age.

This is the state created and ruled by the great pharaoh Amenemhe I. He was the second king to write a literary work. He is attributed an "instruction" which, among other things, recounts in detail the conspiracy against him, as well as the nocturnal attack on his quarters.

The true author of the *Instruction* seems to be the great sage Akhtoy, whose fame outlived Classical Egypt.

In the 30<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, Amenemhe I fell victim to a conspiracy. Here is how *The Story of Sinuhe* describes the death of the king:

Year 30, month 3 of the inundation season, day 7.

The God ascended to his horizon (Akhet).

The King of Upper and Lower Egypt,

Shatepaibre, flew up to the heaven, being joined to the Yot [the sun disk],

and the God's body being mixed

with that of him who made him.

The capital was silent, the hearts were sorrowful.

The Great Double Gate was locked.

The court had bowed its head on its knees, the people were moaning.

The pyramid of the ideologue of Egyptian statehood is 50 km south of Memphis, in el-Lisht.

The news of the king's death kindled Fear in the Valley. This stirred up memories of the times of chaos and despair. This is what *The Story of Sinuhe* tells:

My heart was disturbed, my arms spread out.

Trembling came over every part of my body.

I took off in a rush, to find for myself a place of concealment.

I hid between two shrubs in order to clear the road for its traveller. I went south. I did not plan to go to the capital, for I thought that there might be riots, and I would be unable to survive.

Amenemhe I was succeeded by his son Senwosre I (Senusret). As K. Sethe ingeniously notes, his name was the prototype of the Greek Sesostris in the account of Herodotus. Here is how Egypt's new sovereign is described in *The Story of Sinuhe*:

He conquered while still in the egg [in embryo].

His face was turned to the King's power even at birth.

Senwosre I was the first Egyptian king after the turbulent age who, thanks to the activity of his predecessor, succeeded in conquering all of Egypt. He is the prototype of Herodotus's hero Sesostris, who conquered almost half the world.

The statesmanly might of Senwosre I is at the basis of the account. Even The Story of Sinuhe, recorded during the reign of this Egyptian king, notes that Senwosre I controlled vast territories from the Mediterranean islands in the north to Punt in the south. In Herodotus's account traditional Egyptology is more inclined to identify Senwosre III or Ramesses II, whose conquests became quite popular in the New Kingdom. I will only note that for the Egyptians, the conquests of their sovereigns were not as significant as they would have been in Antiquity or even in our times. No one in the Valley doubted the might of one of the most powerful deities: the king. What the Egyptians were really concerned with was the functioning of the state organism. Hence the pivotal role of Senwosre I (Sesostris in Herodotus) in Egyptian memory. He was the king who finally succeeded in restoring the state in the Nile valley. If certain features of Senwosre III or Ramesses II made their way into Herodotus's account, they were later additions. Unfortunately, Herodotus visited the Nile valley when Egypt was no longer Egypt. Besides, the period that had elapsed since, say, the age of the Pyramid Builders, was as long as the period that separates us from Herodotus. The major problem, however, is that "the father of history" took the liberty of calling things in the Valley by names translated into the language of Antiquity.

Senwosre I completed what had been undertaken by his great predecessor. On accession, he took the throne name of Kheprkare, thus proclaiming his allegiance to Heliopolis. He continued the campaigns to the south and conquered Lower Nubia, where in his 18th regnal year he established an Egyptian garrison at Buchen, near the Second Cataract of the Nile. His influence also extended to Kush, the land between the second and third cataracts of the Nile. The name "Kush" was known even in the Old Kingdom, becoming quite popular in the age of the Middle Kingdom. In the Bible, Kush is the son of Ham, the brother of Mizraim (Egypt). The island of Sai in this region was also under the influence of the king. At that time, Egypt also traded with the kingdom in Kerma. The southernmost inscription of Senwosre I has been found on the Isle of Argo north of Dongola.

The Egyptians continued working the gold mines east of Coptos, as well as the quarries in Wadi Hammamat.

By the start of the Middle Kingdom, ties with Punt had been already established, and the finds along the coast of the Red Sea, reported by A. Zayed and F. Davies, suggest an expedition to Punt under Senwosre I:

- 1. <<The King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Kheprkare, beloved of the god Hentj-Khetj, sun of Re, Senwosre, beloved of Hathor, the mistress of Punt>>.
- 2. <<...the mine of Punt, may they reach it in peace and come back in peace>>.

In his 21st and 23rd regnal years, Senwosre I sent at least two expeditions for alabaster to Hatnoub. He consolidated his

authority over the oases in the Libyan desert. He took good care of the maintenance of communications between Abydos and the oases el-Kharga. The king also defended the northeastern frontiers and the mines in Sinai. Busy trade with the Syro-Palestinian region as far north as Ugarit has also been documented.

Senwosre I is the builder king. Evidence of his active building policies has survived on 35 sites to the present day. Apparently stone blocks for 60 sphinxes and 150 statues were hewn during his reign. He also left traces in Faiyum, where the kings of the Middle Kingdom launched a grandiose irrigation project reclaiming a vast area of fertile land from the lake.

The dedication to Heliopolis is confirmed by the rebuilding of the temple to Amun-Re even in the third year of Senwosre's reign, and by the two obelisks which the king erected outside the temple pylon in Heliopolis in honour of his Sed festival. The Sed festival also inspired the construction of the "White Chapel" - the pavilion of Senwosre I in the temple to Amun-Re in Karnak.

The king built a pyramid south of his father's tomb in el-Lisht. He reigned Egypt for about 34 years. His successor, Amenemhe II, reigned about 30 years in peace. In his last years on the throne, he undertook an expedition to Punt. In recent years, the *Annals* of Amenemhe II have provided new details on his reign. Senwosre II, who succeeded Amenemhe II and reigned about 15 years, also reaped the fruits of the active constructive policies pursued by Amenemhe I and Senwosre I.

During Dynasty XII, Egypt's influence in the Middle East grew. The dynasty has left traces in el-Tod, Ras Shamra, Mishrife and Megiddo. There seems to be proof of the spread of the Snofru cult, typical of Dynasty XII, even in the area of present-day Ankara! Evidence of contacts with the Hyksos from the age of Senwosre II is also to be found on the wall of the tomb of the nomarch Khnumkhotep in Beni Hassan.

Minoan pottery has been found in tombs in Abydos and el-Lahun, along with Egyptian artifacts in Crete. The dynasty was concerned with the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia. The Egyptian influence in Byblos was so great that the local officials started adopting Egyptian titles.

When Senwosre III ascended the Egyptian throne after a comparatively long period of peace, internal and external problems flared up afresh. He had to restrict the authority of the nomarchs, who ruled their nomes as local princelings at the head of dynasties with a longer history than that of the Twelfth Royal House. He divided the country into three regions: North, South and "Head of the South" (Elephantine and Lower Nubia), each region having its own administration and respective powers.

Meanwhile, there was trouble in Nubia too. After the lasting peace, incursions across the southern Egyptian border intensified. Senwosre III decided against resolving the problem by campaigns. He set out to ensure a transport corridor and undertook to clear and enlarge the canal built near Shellal even in the age of Merenre, making the cataracts at Aswan navigable. Thus in his 16<sup>th</sup> regnal year, Egyptian ships could sail right up to the Second Cataract.

The military campaigns in the eighth, tenth and sixteenth years of his reign consolidated the southern frontier at Semne. In those days, the frontier was defended by eight fortresses between Semna and Buhen. The fortresses at Semna West, Komma and Uronarti are masterpieces of Egyptian military architecture. During the New Kingdom, Senwosre III was worshipped as a local god in Egyptian Nubia.

He mounted a military campaign to Palestine, but we do not know to what extent this was associated with the conquest of the land.

The *Texts of Curses* against the pharaoh's internal and external enemies also date from the middle of Dynasty XII.

After almost 36 years on the throne, Senwosre III was succeeded by Amenemhe III. He was the only pharaoh of the Middle Kingdom who could rival the great kings of old Egyptian times.

Amenemhe III curtailed the power of the nomarchs and provincial nobility. He was the only Middle Kingdom king to build an enormous stone edifice made up of numerous halls, thousands of rooms and passages sealed off by giant blocks. This unique building matched the Great Pyramids at Giza and, in later times, awed the Greeks as much as the pyramids themselves. More precisely, the Greeks were astounded not by the edifice itself, but by what had been left of it - yet even that was comparable to the Seven Wonders of the World. The Greeks called it "Labyrinth."

The edifice eventually crumbled, leaving inchoate traces and a plethora of questions. The main question is what was the purpose of the Labyrinth?

Today the Labyrinth is universally believed to have been a royal mortuary temple with compartments for the tutelary deities of the nomes. To quote Y.Y. Perepyolkin, "uniting the nome deities in a single temple around the person of the king was meant to align the nomes themselves with the all-Egyptian power of the pharaoh more closely."

Amenemhe III also completed the grand irrigation project of the Middle Kingdom sovereigns in Faiyum.

There are numerous monuments from the almost half-acentury reign of Amenemhe III, but our knowledge of details is practically limited. Amenemhe III was also concerned with the state of the southern frontier at Semna. He was succeeded by Amenemhe IV who, after a short reign, was replaced by his sister and, possibly, queen, Nefrwsebek, after which Dynasty XII came to a close. Thus the Classical Age in the history of Egypt ended similarly to the Old Kingdom, which is also believed to have concluded with a female pharaoh.

The next Thirteenth Dynasty was related to the Twelfth. Despite the crisis in central government, it managed to retain its hold on the regions of vital significance to Egypt. Nor does there appear to be any particular malfunctioning in the state organism. By the middle of its reign, however, a parallel Fourteenth Royal House had appeared in Egypt, and the land gradually descended into the Second Intermediate Period.

Such was the state of affairs at this particular flow, level of history. The Egyptian sources, however, document other flow-levels too. By the end of the Classical Age, the doctrine of the invisible "world," of the relation between our "world" and the levels of the hereafter, had already taken shape. If the *Pyramid Texts* of the Old Kingdom solved the problem of the king's after-life, his subjects were faced with the question of how to follow in the footsteps of their lord and, serving him, benefit from the after-life too.

Since the king was not a mortal but a god, he alone had the soul Ba (Bai) which left the body at "death" and became associated with the supreme god. Until the end of the Old Kingdom, only the kings and the other gods had a Ba. At the same time, the king became Osiris, and his successor - Horus. The royal tomb is evidence of the belief in the need of an immortal body (the mummy), although a series of records show that in the age of the Old Kingdom the mummy was no longer needed for the after-life and may be regarded simply as a tradition. These conclusions were drawn in 1983-1984 by A. Bolshakov in his study on ancient Egyptian tombs. The king's pyramid also proves the need of a home for the Double Ka and, as ancient Egyptian inscriptions document, it also had to preserve the name as one of the most important essences of the person. Eternal life depended on the integrity of the name. For the inhabitants of the Valley, the ancient Egyptian word mwt, conventionally translated as "death," meant a transitional state from this level of history to other levels. Unlike the king and the gods, until the close of the Old Kingdom Egyptians did not have a Ba, and their hopes were pinned on the concepts of the Double and the Name. Here is what G. Maspero writes about the Ka: "The Egyptians believe that the soul is a very thin Double who replicates a man's personality in minute details: his height, colour, movements, gait. Whenever one of us appears in the world, his Double or, as the local inhabitants call it, his Ka comes with him." Apart from "Double," the Ka is also interpreted as "life-giving force," "genius protector," "individuality," "personality." The Double was believed to accompany the person throughout his life on earth, following him into his tomb - even more importantly, the Double survived the death of the mortal body in the after-life. The place of the Double in the concept of tomb representations has already been discussed in the chapter on the Old Kingdom. One of the numerous aspects of the Ka is that precisely the Ka is the aspect of the human personality that may be depicted by artistic devices.

The room housing the statue of the deceased in the ancient Egyptian tomb is called "court of the Double." The inscriptions indicate that the Egyptians regarded the image as a "gate" from which the portrayed person appears, i.e. the Double is the living thing that resides in and emerges from the representation. The texts unambiguously note that the artists are creators of the after-life, i.e. the world of the dead. The after-life is confined to the life of the reality associated with the images, i.e. the invisible world proves to be made up of a multitude of small, "private" worlds, each one of which is as individual and as particular as any tomb with its images might be. This "world of images" exists against the background of the transcendental "world of the body" which, by force of its supernatural nature, cannot be depicted but is described in the mortuary texts.

We know certain distinct properties of the world of the Double, i.e. of the world associated with the images. There is a difference between paintings and statues. The paintings are

"gates," from which the portrayed person or god appears. The statues are "bodies" inhabited/haunted by the portrayed person/god. There is a canon of the proportions of the human figure. Egyptian art is not familiar with the third dimension, perspective and chiaroscuro. The phenomenon of Egyptian art may be explained by the ancient Egyptian concept of the afterworld. The relationship between the after-life and the world of images makes possible the appearance of subjective elements. Anyone may make corrections in the Double World created by and for him. Everything that tormented the Egyptian in this life may be discarded, and all his wishes may come true.

Ultimately all people, all living creatures and objects have a Double, which means that parallel with the visible reality there is a world of the Ka - an exact replica of this world, a Double World. At least that is what the ancient Egyptians believed.

In the introduction to the complete collection of V. Golenishchev, O. D. Berlev cites the following features which the dead body and the image-Ka have in common:

- 1. The body and the image-Ka have no sight;
- 2. Both have the capacity to hear and, thanks to "hearing," can communicate with our world.

Belief in this capacity led to the emergence of a "special cohort" of priests who specialized in reading aloud and chanting lists of foods, drinks, clothes and possessions for the Ka images. Hearing those lists, the deceased enjoyed the listed items and acquired a sense of health, security and welfare. The living, however, conceived of a way in which the deceased could get everything they needed alone, without the direct participation of the former. A mortuary formula was introduced for the purpose. The deceased could now hear the written text without the need of having it read aloud, and could acquire what the text contained without having it named, i.e. the formula creates a capacity for seeing, endowing the dead body or image with "sight";

3. The dead body and the image-Ka have a sense of smell. Hence the enormous importance of incense-burning in the cult.

The features which the body and the image have in common are at the core of the concepts embodied in ceremonies such as the opening of the eyes, the ears, the mouth and the nostrils.

O. D. Berlev notes that the two worlds - the world of the body and the world of the image-Ka - are inclined to mix. To judge from the *Book of the Dead* and other texts, the world of the Ka infiltrated the world of the body in the New Kingdom, whereas the latter infiltrated the world of the Ka much earlier - even around the close of the Old Kingdom.

The concepts of the Ka and the Name intertwine at least outwardly, and in Late Egypt, during Dynasty XXII, the Ka and the Name were regarded almost as identical. Ultimately, life upon departure from the body was seen as a parallel existence at different levels of the "immortal body," the Name and the Double, which were bound by an invisible thread. A series of records suggest that this entire complex was propelled and governed by the Name. Apparently even without a Ba, common Egyptians imagined the after-life as an existence with greater opportunities mainly thanks to the fact that the human personality existed on several planes at the same time, freed from the chains of the body.

In the texts, the afterworld is "West," *Imenti* in Egyptian: this is the necropolis, West as a cardinal point, as well as the complex concept of the hereafter. The East is in the opposite direction - the land of god, somewhere beyond the Eastern Desert, the place from where the Sun rises.

According to one scheme, the concept of the after-life in the Old Kingdom boiled down to the life of the Ka in the tomb. The First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom were

already parallel to the realm of the dead, where the god of the dead, Osiris, reigned supreme. Finally, according to the same scheme, in the New Kingdom we could talk of a World (=Cosmos) of the Dead.

After the fall of the Old Kingdom, those in power started copying the Pyramid Texts on burial coffins. New sentences were added. This is how the Coffin Texts appeared. Now even common Egyptians became Osiris at death and had a Ba which associated with the supreme deity. Of course, those changes applied to the nobility only. It was not before the New Kingdom, with the proliferation of the Book of the Dead, that virtually all inhabitants of the Valley acquired a Ba and every Egyptian became Osiris at death thanks to the fact that the texts were now written on a considerably cheaper material - papyrus. The difference between the Coffin Texts and the Book of the Dead is that the former were painted on burial coffins and the latter, on papyrus. Thus the concept of the Ba offers an insight, albeit a schematic one, into the evolution of the populace of the Valley. Just like any simplified scheme, that of the Ba is convenient but hard to sustain. The truth is that Old Kingdom texts of private individuals do not mention the Ba, and this apparently invites the self-evident conclusion that commoners did not have a Ba. The Ba, however, figures in the names of private individuals even in the Third Dynasty. The first name on record is Khai-Bau-Seker! Later names show that common people also had a Ba. Notwithstanding the difficulties in deciphering, the facts are obvious:

- 1. Ba ef Ba
- 2. Ba ef Khnum

Even the tombs of the First and Second Dynasty were provided with a channel-like narrow passage leading to the outside. Such a passage could be found even in the Fourth Dynasty. This passage was probably to let the Ba leave the tomb.

The plural of Ba is Bau and means "might." Bau is an attribute of the king. Talking of a Ba of common people seems to

have been indecent in the Old Kingdom. In the New Kingdom, the concepts of the Ba and the Ka blended. The doctrine of the Ba is probably associated with Heracleopolis.

After the end of the Old Kingdom, every Egyptian became a deity at death, and his flesh - divine. At least that is what the Egyptians hoped and aspired to attain. To quote O. D. Berlev, the deceased was a "'sun' residing on the horizon of his tomb."

Until the end of the Old kingdom, life after death was life with the god, i.e. the king. Tomb inscriptions pray that the deceased be received by the eternal god, i.e. the king, and be allowed to "tread his divine paths." Tombs were built around the pyramids and even though each tomb, i.e. world, could be individual, all rotated around a single centre: the pyramid of the eternal god, i.e. the king.

Yet what about those who could not afford to build and fully equip a tomb? The solution came from the Name and the Portrayal. Such unpropertied persons could appear in some-body else's tomb, portrayed among the many other servants and labourers of the tomb owner, acquiring eternal life through their Double and Name in their capacity as future "servants" in the hereafter, on the "estate" of the tomb owner.

The new age after the ruin of the Old Kingdom enabled propertied Egyptians to be deified in perpetuity. The deceased survived this life as Osiris, but also as Horus! Thus the old concept of the deceased king was applied to common Egyptians too. According to the *Coffin Texts*, spells were needed in the after-life to maintain the function of the heart and organs, to protect the deceased from suffocation, from the upsidedown position, from eating excrements, from another death. At the same time, other spells helped the deceased to become "any god which he wishes to become," as well as to take all sorts of forms.

Judgment in the after-life is documented in detail in the *Book of the Dead*, but the "classical concept" about it, according to R. Anthes, appeared in *Instruction for Merikare*:

Do justice, that you may live long upon earth. Calm the weeper, do not oppress the widow, do not oust a man from his father's property, do not degrade magnates from their seats. Beware of punishing wrongfully; do not kill for it will not profit you, but punish with beatings and with imprisonment, for thus this land will be set in order, excepting only the rebel who has conspired, for God knows those who are disaffected, and God will smite down his evil doing with blood. It is the lenient man who [...] lifetime; so do not kill a man of whose ability you are aware, and with whom you once recited writings...

(R. O. Foulkner, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, edited by William Kelly Simpson, New Haven and London, 1972, p. 183.)

Thus to refute accusations in the next life, one must do good and refrain from sinning in this life.

Still, the concept of punishment in the after-life for sins on earth is adequately documented only on the eve of the Christian age.

Judgment in the after-life is described in Chapter 125 of the *Book of the Dead* and even though it is absent in the *Coffin Texts*, contemporary Egyptology is inclined to assume that Chapter 125 dates from the early Middle Kingdom. Chapter 125 is made up of the Negative Confession and the Judgment. If the deceased was exonerated, the Judgment was: "The monster Amemet the Destroyer may not devour him [the deceased]. Let them give him bread from that offered to Osiris and an arable plot of land in the Fields of Satisfaction, equal to one tenth." Upon exoneration, the deceased was declared "true of voice," i.e. "exonerated," acquiring access to the world of the gods.

Regardless of the Judgment, "the true of voice" desired to visit this life, to "come forth by day" and - according to the *Coffin Texts* and, later, the *Book of the Dead* - he would "come forth by day" in the form of a flower, bird, etc.

After the Old Kingdom, the dead not only became Osiris, but also headed for the necropolis in Abydos. Those who could not be buried near the tomb of Osiris there, would leave a mortuary stela or even a cenotaph. The tomb of the scribe Amenemhe, Thebes, Dynasty XVIII, is an excellent guide to the Classical concepts. Even though they date from the New Kingdom, the inscriptions are in Middle Egyptian and use Middle Egyptian categories:

O overseer of the house, scribe Amenemhet, true of voice. Mayst thou enter (and) go forth from the West, mayst thou stride through the door of the netherworld, mayst thou adore Re (when) he rises in the mountain, mayst thou worship him (when) he sets in the horizon, mayst thou receive oblations (and) be satisfied because of food (from) upon the altar of the lord (of) eternity (=Osiris).

(Gardiner A.H. Egyptian Grammar., 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford, 1982, p. 70.)

According to the texts, eternal life is possible when the "body" is in the underworld with Osiris, the Double is divine among the gods, the Ba is with the creator, and the Name is in the mouths of the living. The shadow and other elements constituting the personality are also mentioned. All those essences, which are associated with one another, are at various levels and, at the same time, all constitute an entity, i.e. a single personality.

The passage to the afterworld is explained by the doctrine of *hemu*. The deceased was met by the *hmt* (feminine of *hemu*) of the West, i.e. "manifestation," "form," "incarnation" of the hereafter. Modern man is met by grandmothers, grandfathers, relatives, friends, who died a long time ago. The soul of devout Christians is led to heaven by angels. People from differ-

ent religions and cultures cross to the afterworld with the assistance of those whom the mind is ready to accept. The Egyptians conceptualized this experience even in ancient times, and realized that either way, regardless of the creature that meets you, it is not what you see but it is a *hmt*, i.e. female, in other words - passive, a manifestation of *IMENTJ* ("the West"). The same mechanism is also at the basis of the encounter between Man and Deity. We know of two such encounters, both from Middle Kingdom literature: *The Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor* and *The Story of the Shepherd*. Indicatively, in the latter the shepherd meets a goddess and, as the text explains, "she was not in the form of a human *hemu*." In other words, the goddess, albeit in female form, met the shepherd in her divine rather than human form, as we realized only after O. D. Berlev explained the doctrine of *hemu*.

The Classical Age saw a psychological journey to the boundaries of the human world and, by divine will, the Egyptian ended up on the border island and met face to face with the Serpent God who guards the boundaries of the World. The gods lived beyond. All this is described in *The Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor* which, in all likelihood, dates from the age of Amenemhe I. The copy which we have is later, probably from Dynasty XIII. At least that is what the study of the orthography of certain key words in the text shows.

The serpent-guardian of frontiers was quite typical of the Egyptians. On the spiritual plane, the Nile rose from the region of the First Cataract or, more precisely, there were two Niles: one flowing north through Egypt and the other, south. The sources of the Nile were in a cave guarded by a serpent. That was the southern frontier of the land.

A serpent of the same size as that in *The Story of the Ship-wrecked Sailor* (30 cubits long) guarded the mound Bahaw, the mountain of Sunrise, the place where the sun kissed the earth at sunrise. He obviously guarded the boundary between the world of the living and the land of god.

The Egyptian literature created by the end of the Classical Age became an exemplary model for the next centuries. The only copy of the first encyclopaedia in world history dates from that period too.

In Egyptian literature, the world of the living and the other levels are equal, and the problems of one state or another are described without any particular introductory notes and explanations. For the Egyptians, everything was real and natural.

Along with everything said about the king so far, we should mention his human form too. The texts say: "And then His Majesty said, did, etc." In the original, "His Majesty" is hemuef. We now know that hemu-ef is not any "majesty" but "his instrument!, his form, his manifestation." Above all, this is an instrument by means of which the divine force can manifest itself, its will. When the texts cite the years of the reign of "his hemu," the hemu is designated by the proper name of the king. This is the name locked in the cartouche which immediately follows the title "Son of Re" (the Sun). It is not difficult to prove that the divine force that has this *hemu* is no other deity but the king of Egypt, who is the younger sun. The name of this divine force is written in the cartouche after the title "njsw - bjt" (jnsjbja), "King and Lord" (King of Upper and King of Lower Egypt). Since the deity that bears this name is identical with the Sun, the name contains the component "Re." Thus Amenemhe I is the hemu of King Shatepaibre, Thutmose III of Menheperre, Amenhotpe III of Nebmare, Ramesses II of Usimare-Setepenre, etc. We can now answer the question of why the Egyptian king was a god rather than a man-god, and why he definitely did not have a dual nature, divine and human, but in all cases just a single one - divine. The answer is simple: the divine force and his instrument, i.e. hemu, are not identical. As noted earlier in this chapter, the hemu is associated with the words "king," "netjer" (god), "Ka" (Double), and that the phrase hemu netjer can translate as "priest," and hemu ka as

"priest of the Double." Obviously the priest, i.e. the *hemu* of the god is not identical with the deity whom he serves, and this also applies to the *hemu* (priest) of the Ka, i.e. the "Double."

This is also the relation between the king and his hemu. A good example is the quoted passage from *The Story of Sinuhe* describing the death of Amenemhe I, upon which the god Shatepaibre ascended the sky and his divine flesh merged with the flesh of the sun god that had created it.

All this sheds light on a very interesting practice in the New Kingdom, documented during the reign of Amenhotpe III and Ramesses II who, deifying themselves, worshiped their own idols. It is clear which essence served whom.

Thus the Egyptians believed that the Sun and King ruling the world were identical! And that the human form of the King was only a *hemu*, i.e. a manifestation, form, *instrument* by means of which the eternal god reigned. In this world of forms only the forms, instruments changed.

Whose forms and instruments? Those of the deity in the singular, the deity which is unnamed but is definitely a sun god. Thus the human form of the king is but a *hemu*, i.e. "incarnation-form" of the god who rules the world and is eternal. Only "the forms" change.

Such was the complicated, multi-aspectual world of the Egyptians. Their doctrine of this flow-history of the living is characterized by the term "nefer," i.e. this is the pronounced, manifested world. The level made up of a multitude of "worlds" in which the Ka resided could be generalized as an "anekh-level." This is the divine "world," i.e. the "world" of the forces whose permanent attribute is the anekh sign of life. The supreme state is that of the sun god. The Ba souls assimilate with him without losing their individuality, they can visit this life and, at the same time, are "in the hand of the lord of eternity."

The myth of Osiris, Isis and Horus is first expounded in the *Pyramid Texts*. Until the Fourth Dynasty included, Osiris was considered a malevolent deity. He was the king's enemy. The prayers to him date from the Fifth Dynasty.

The *Pyramid Texts* recount how Osiris was slain by his brother Seth. Isis and Nephthys eventually found and buried the body. Isis revived Osiris and conceived by him their son Horus, whom she later bore and brought up in the Delta. Horus fought and defeated a serpent even as a child. When he grew up, he went on a journey in quest of his father. Later the Heliopolitan court, headed by the god Geb, declared Horus king.

This is a very brief summary of the earliest account of the myth. This main narrative was later embellished with elements of the Eye and, most importantly, of the fight between Horus and Seth. Among the main sources I will note the papyrus describing the ceremonies at the coronation of Senwosre I.

On the whole, according to R. Anthes, "the source of the Osiris myth is the genealogy of Horus." He believes that the elements of the myth were inspired by two events:

- 1. the death of the king and his transformation into Osiris;
- 2. the accession of his son and his deification on earth as the god Horus.

Passion plays enacting the finding, burial and resurrection of Osiris were performed in Abydos. We know a funerary ritual from royal tombs and burial places of subjects from *c*. 1500 B.C., in which the deceased was identified with "Osiris - grain" - the moist earth and grain in a clay mold. The sprouting grain was regarded as "Osirian resurrection" (the term is coined by R. Anthes).

In the New Kingdom, Osiris was considered a personification of Egypt, lord of the starlit sky and king of the dead and the living. The sinister aspect of the kingdom of Osiris was no

longer mentioned. They also seem to have avoided focusing on the death of the god as described in the myth.

The Egyptians never expounded the myth of Osiris, Isis and Horus in a full account. We owe the latter to Greek writers.

## Chapter Six

## SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD AND THE HYKSOS INVASION

c. 1785-1580 B.C.

Classical Egypt started falling into decline under Dynasty XIII, despite its efforts to carry on the tradition of Dynasty XII. Even though central power weakened, the nomarchs failed to recover from the blow dealt to them even by Amenemhe III. Egypt partly retained its influence in Byblos, and Nubia remained under the control of the pharaohs.

Soon, however, a rival of the Thirteenth Theban Dynasty appeared in the western part of the Delta. A new dynasty, the Fourteenth, was founded in Xois, capital of Lower Egyptian Nome VI. This dynasty aspired to share control over Egypt with the Thirteenth. Few monuments are extant from Dynasty XIV, but the latter also rivalled the later Dynasty XV founded by the Hyksos conquerors, who established their capital at Avaris (Hwt-weret) in the eastern Delta.

The Hyksos seized Avaris during the reign of Sobkhotep IV (Dynasty XIII). The term "Hyksos" is the Greek form of the Egyptian *hekau-khasut*, "rulers of foreign lands or desert mounds" (in Egyptian "foreign land" and "desert mounds" are practically identical.

The Egyptian word "khasut" (pl.) means anything beyond the boundaries of Egypts, therefore we cannot discern any trace of an ethnonym. Incidentally, hekau-khasut are mentioned even in The Story of Sinuhe (early Dynasty XII) as inhabitants of the Syro-Palestinian region. This term may have applied to the

Asiatic tribes or Retjenu, Aamu, Setjetiu and Mentjiu, whom the Egyptians knew from earlier hostilities. The ancient Near Eastern legend is inclined to identify the Hyksos conquest with the settlement of the Hebrews in Egypt. Many leading scholars uphold this thesis. The names of certain Hyksos kings contain Semitic words.

The Hyksos ruled part of Egypt at least 108 years (considering the last dated monuments!). Taking Avaris, the Hyksos proceeded south towards Memphis along the eastern border of the Delta. In about half a century, they advanced to 20 km north of Heliopolis, after establishing strongholds in Faras, Tell-el-Sahaba, Bubastis, Inshas and Tell-el-Yahudiya. The Hyksos advance towards Heliopolis coincided with the decline of Dynasty XIII. Only two Hyksos kings probably succeeded in extending their influence to Thebes. Seals and stone inscriptions with the names of Khyan and Apopi have been found about 10 km south of Thebes.

The conquerors adopted the royal titulary of the Egyptians and declared themselves "sons of Re." Outwardly, at least, they worshipped the Egyptian gods. Their state god, however, was a foreign deity which they tried to identify with the Egyptian god Seth. They introduced many Semitic features in the iconography of their Seth. In the north, in the Delta, the god Seth is very likely to have been identified with Baal-Reshef and the Hittite god Teshub. The Hyksos also worshiped the Syro-Palestinian goddess Anat-Astarte.

In his works on Egyptian history, Y.Y. Perepyolkin notes that New Kingdom Egyptians called the deities of Syria and Anatolia "Seths." This is a very important point which should be kept in mind in working with original texts. The elevation of the eastern Delta to the main site of the Seth cult also dates from Hyksos times.

So does the *Rhind* Papyrus, a collection of mathematical problems. The Hyksos king Khyan maintained active contacts with the northern lands. A lion from his reign has been found

in Damascus. His name also figures on the lid of an alabaster vessel discovered by A. Evans in Knossos (Crete). During his close to 50-year reign, he maintained active contacts with the Mediterranean.

F. von Bissing believes that the discovery of Creto-Mycenaean vases in the ruins of Kahun could relate to the reign of Khyan and his successor. According to this leading scholar, it is "clear that at that time a cultural exchange was in the making, which resulted, on the one hand, in the flowering of Mycenaean culture and, on the other, in the magnificent art of the New Kingdom. It is hard to say who was the inspiration and who was the emulator, particularly in the case of the palace in Knossos, as well as in the case of the Egyptian tombs." Dynasty XV and, probably, XVI, were Hyksos.

Dynasty XVII was Egyptian, from Thebes, and descended from a branch of Dynasty XIII. In general, we do not know anything about the end of Dynasty XIII. When the Hyksos invaders advanced to 20 km north of Heliopolis, Dedumesiu I, the 33<sup>rd</sup> or 34<sup>th</sup> king of Dynasty XIII, reigned in Thebes. If he was Manetho's Tutimaius, then the Hyksos must have established control over northeastern Egypt during his reign. N. A. Grimal believes that this identification is reasonable since Dedumesiu I is the last known king of Dynasty XIII, who left inscriptions in Thebes, Deir el Bahari and Gebelein. The subsequent state of Theban affairs is not at all clear.

The struggle against the enslavers was launched by the Seventeenth Theban Dynasty. We know about the quarrel between the Theban king Seqenenre and the Hyksos Apopi from a literary piece. The analysis of the wounds on the mummy of Seqenenre shows that they came from Hyksos weapons. The king was slain in the prime of life.

The war between the Hyksos royal house and the Theban kingdom climaxed in the age of Kamose, the last king of Dynasty XVII. He opened hostilities "on the orders of Amun." The struggle between the king, who was supported by the

army, and the hereditary nobility - a main contradiction in the nascent New Egyptian age - was outlined even at the military council. The nobles were against the war since they felt safe in their dominions.

Kamose's victorious war was completed by his brother and successor Ahmose I (Amasis), who seized Avaris and drove the Hyksos from Egypt. This was the end of the first large-scale foreign invasion in African history.

Contemporary Egyptology is quite reserved about an earlier thesis of the cultural influence which the Hyksos were supposed to have exerted on Egyptian history. The facts suggest otherwise.

Ahmose I was the first king of Dynasty XVIII, which founded the New Kingdom.

## Chapter Seven

## **NEW KINGDOM**

1580-1085 B.C.

The New Egyptian state emerged as a continuation of the war of liberation against the Hyksos, and was therefore military in character during most of the period. The Egyptian pharaohs built an empire of huge proportions for the age: from the northern boundaries of Syria to the Fourth Cataract of the Nile to the south, with Egypt exerting influence on the lands from the Mediterranean islands to present-day Somalia. The New Egyptian civilization was the opposite of Old Egypt. Only now did Egypt develop a true slave system. The term baku kept its meaning. In Dynasty XVIII, the word hemu came to mean "slave." Most of the enormous influx of captives were distributed among the temple estates of Amun. Evidence of exploitation of foreigners on the state and royal estate is scant. Quite a few prisoners of war were drafted into the army.

According to Tjeneny, the scribe who recorded the *Annals of Thutmose III*, the Egyptian populace was divided as follows:

- 1. warriors;
- 2. priests;
- 3. *hemuu-nisut* (in the Middle Egyptian sense of the term!);
  - 4. "all sorts of craftsmen"

Until the end of this age, Egyptian traders had a subordinate and rather modest status. Monetary relations remained underdeveloped in the New Kingdom too. Value was measured in silver, gold and copper.

New Egyptian society was not familiar with the caste system. The Old Egyptian distinction between the *peru-djet* of the noble and "the house of the king" sunk into oblivion. There was a difference between land ownership and land tenure. In Egypt, the land belonged to the king and queen, the gods and goddesses (temples), whereas the subjects were only granted tenure. Unlike the Old Kingdom, the New Egyptian Kingdom elevated the title of "nomarch" to unprecedented prominence, and the office of regional governor became one of the highest of the realm. Some nomarchs held central government offices.

The development of science in the age is attested by two medical documents - the *Ebers* Papyrus and the *Edwin Smith* Surgical Papyrus - which, however, are copies of considerably earlier texts. New Kingdom astronomers knew that the stars were in the sky in daytime too, but could not be observed because of the sun. The Egyptians used water clocks and sundials, "clocks" determining the time by the stars, as well as by the shadow cast. The mortuary temple of Queen Hashepsowe (Hatshepsut) was conceived as a sort of encyclopaedia of foreign lands. The earliest dated water clock goes back to Amenhotpe III and is now at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (JE 37525). The water clock was invented by the Egyptian Amenemhe, who lived in the age of Amenhotpe I.

Knowledge of the afterworld was compiled in the *Book of the Dead. Amduat, Book of What Is in the Underworld* dates from the early New Kingdom. It was first recorded on the walls of the funeral chamber of Thutmose I, but is presumed to date from the Old or Middle Kingdom.

The first illustrations of a text in world history go back to the New Kingdom too: in the *Book of the Dead*.

The New Kingdom comprises dynasties XVIII, XIX and XX. Thebes remained the capital of the realm. Memphis and Heliopolis were semi-capital cities. The northeastern Delta, however, started playing an increasingly important role in Egyp-

tian politics. Most of the Egyptian army was deployed here, and the king spent most of the year in this part of the land.

The main antagonists in the New Egyptian age were the hereditary aristocracy and the priesthood of Amun of Thebes that was closely associated with the former, on the one hand, and "bureaucratic" aristocracy and military officials, on the other. The mainstay of the king - the army and officialdom - were not of noble descent. Most of them descended from nemhu, literally "poor people," "orphans." In the New Kingdom, "orphans" meant "people without an office which they could inherit from their parents." Nemhu also meant "free people."

Starting from the middle of Dynasty XVIII, the ancient phrase "per'aa" - "Great House," i.e. the Palace - from which the contemporary word "pharaoh" is derived, started to refer to the person of the king.

DYNASTY XVIII. Ahmose I expelled the Hyksos from Egypt. He conquered Sharuhen in southern Palestine. To the south in Nubia, he reached the Second Cataract of the Nile. On the whole, Ahmose I restored Egypt within its boundaries under Dynasty XII. He had to quell internal resistance too. A civil war broke out in Upper Egypt. The texts document a river battle won by Ahmose I. The liberator king also had to deal with the conspiracy of one Tetian, probably in Upper Egypt again. The events following the accession of Dynasty XVIII are recounted in the biography of the overseer of the rowers, Ahmose.

The last known regnal year of Ahmose I is the 22<sup>nd</sup>. His successor Amenhotpe I reigned about 21 years. We do not know how far south he succeeded in penetrating Nubia, but during his reign a separate governorate was established in northern Nubia. The governor was awarded the title "Son of the King." There was nothing new in this administration of the South. Amenhotpe I also fought the Libyans in the west. He did not

succeed in expanding Egypt beyond the boundaries of the Middle Kingdom either.

In general, the kings of the late Dynasty XVII and early Dynasty XVIII aspired to restore the state from the age of the Middle Kingdom. This ambition was proclaimed even by Kamose: "What use is being aware of my power when there is one ruler in Avaris and another in Kush, I am in the company of an Asiatic and a Nubian, and each rules his part of Egypt?"

This speech of Kamose to the nobles outlines the borders of the Middle Kingdom which Dynasty XVII and the first kings of Dynasty XVIII aspired to regain.

Amenhotpe I was succeeded by Thutmose I, whose vigorous reign marked the beginning of the Age of Empire. Upon ascendancy, he had to suppress a revolt in northern Nubia, which probably tried to take advantage of the change of pharaohs. Crushing the insurrection, the Egyptians advanced further south, negotiating the three cataracts of the Nile where they founded a fort on the island of Tombos. Thutmose I also recovered the first navigable canal at the First Cataract.

To the north, the Egyptian army overran Syria and Palestine and reached the Euphrates, where it confronted the forces of the powerful Mesopotamian kingdom of Mittani (Naharina).

Mittani lay in northern Mesopotamia. Never before had Egyptian warriors penetrated so far north and fought with the organized army of a powerful kingdom rather than with tribal formations. Neither had the Egyptians ever seen another great river which, much to their surprise, flowed in the opposite direction of the Nile. They called it "The Inverted River." In the battle between the two armies, the Egyptians emerged victorious. Thutmose I had an inscription carved here, in the central part of the Euphrates.

King Thutmose I launched construction on a grand scale that was to be carried on by other New Kingdom rulers. Before him, the temple of Amun at Karnak was no different from those of the other gods. The building projects of Thutmose I actually initiated the wonder of Karnak. To the west of Thebes, in the Valley of the Kings, a tomb was cut for the king, thus breaking with the ancient tradition of royal burial in pyramids. We do not know how long Thutmose I remained on the throne.

His successor, Thutmose II, brutally suppressed a rebellion in Nubia. He had all the males executed. The Egyptians left alive a single son of the local chief, whom they threw at the feet of Pharaoh. A campaign against the Asiatics is also attested. Thutmose II fell ill and died young. Before that, however, he appointed the son of one of his minor wives, Thutmose III, coregent. Here is how this happened: at a ceremony in Amun's temple in Thebes, the statue of the god singled out Thutmose III. In the reign of Thutmose II, the king's half-sister Hashepsowe (Hatshepsut) was a "great queen" of Egypt. At the death of Thutmose II, she seized power, initially abiding by her late husband's will and leaving Thutmose III formally on the throne. Eventually, however, she assumed the kingship and declared herself pharaoh. The expansionist policies of Dynasty XVIII were terminated for about two decades. I.V. Vinogradov sees the power struggle between Hashepsowe and Thutmose III as a "dress rehearsal" for the future Amarna reform.

Hashepsowe's favourite, the royal architect Senmut, was a priest of Amun and governor of the royal estate and the estate of Amun. The high priest of Amun was also the *tjaty*, vizier, of the realm. Hashepsowe's worship of Amun was unrivalled in ancient Egypt. Inscriptions attest that she rebuilt the temples destroyed by the Hyksos.

Hashepsowe sent an expedition to Punt. She also received envoys from the Mediterranean, probably from Crete. It was she who had "the wonder of Egyptian architecture," the mortuary step temple in Deir el Bahari, built by Senmut. She died in the 21st year of the formal reign of Thutmose III. Terrible retribution was visited on her memory. Thutmose III or-

dered the name of the woman pharaoh erased, her statues smashed and her reliefs obliterated across the land. Her retinue suffered a similar fate. Obliteration of the name and images deprived their bearer of eternal life.

The main source of information about Egypt's active expansionist policies in this period are the so-called Annals of Thutmose III. They were recorded by the scribe Tjeneny. The original extensive version of the Annals was written on rolls of leather which, unfortunately, are not extant. Part of the Annals has survived in the temple at Karnak. The hymn to Thutmose III was later copied on the monuments of Sethoy I and Ramesses II, extolling their exploits. The Annals record the military policy of Thutmose III from his 22nd to 42nd regnal years. In that period he mounted at least 17 military campaigns. In contrast with the forays of his predecessors, he pursued a consistent policy seeking to establish and solidify Egyptian rule in the Syro-Palestinian region. The prince of Kadesh rallied anti-Egyptian sentiments in the region, succeeding in forming a coalition against Egypt. The real perpetrator, however, was the kingdom of Mittani. The Mitanni was populated by Hurrians and was a contemporary of the Kassites in Babylon. The Annals of Thutmose III document five stages in relations with Mittani.

The coalition, headed by the ruler of Kadesh, comprised numerous Asiatic princelings. Their stronghold was at Megiddo in northern Palestine. That is why this important fortress was the main target of the Egyptians in the early conquests of Thutmose III. The royal decree attests that "all rulers of all foreign northern lands are locked up in it, and taking Megiddo is equal to conquering thousands of cities." By the standards of his day, Thutmose III had a huge army of at least 30,000 men. In his description of New Egyptian Thebes, Homer notes that the capital had a 20,000-strong army: "A city with a hundred gates, from each of one of which emerge 200 warriors mounted on war horses."

The two armies clashed outside the walls of Megiddo, and the Egyptians soon put the coalition to flight but failed to cement their victory and take the fortress, since they fell to looting and pillaging what had been abandoned by their enemy. Megiddo fell after an approximately seven-month siege.

The subsequent military campaigns captured and punished Kadesh too, and "the army of His Majesty revelled and anointed themselves with sweet-smelling oils every day as they did at festivals in Egypt." In the course of his northern conquests, Thutmose III embarked on a policy that was later typical of Rome too. He would bring the children of foreign rulers to Egypt, where they were educated and Egyptianized. In due course, they were returned to rule their own inheritance. The local rulers thus considered themselves appointed not by their parents, but by the great king of Egypt. Here is an excerpt from a letter by a local princeling to one of the pharaohs: "I have been appointed to this position not by my father or my mother. The strong hand of the king [of Egypt] introduced me in the house of my father."

Thutmose III twice defeated Mittani which, at that time, was at the peak of its power. This happened in the great conqueror's 33<sup>rd</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> regnal years. To the north, Egypt expanded to Carcemish on the Euphrates, the place where Mesopotamia, Syria and Asia Minor met.

To the south, Egypt bordered on the Fourth Cataract of the Nile.

Thutmose III divided the power of the vizier (*tjaty*), instituting two separate offices: vizier of Upper Egypt and vizier of Lower Egypt. The northern provinces were governed by "the overseer of the northern lands" and Nubia, by "the overseer of the southern lands." He bore the title "Son of the King," even though New Kingdom princes were not overseers of the South. Egyptians settled in Nubia and there were Egyptian cities there. The situation in the North was different, even though Egyptian garrisons were stationed there too.

Unlike Nubia, the northern lands were harder to rule because of their diversity and fragmentation. And if Nubia was considered a natural part of Egypt, the North remained alien by tradition.

After about 54 years on the throne, Thutmose III was succeeded by Amenhotpe II. He brutally crushed revolts in Syria and Palestine. His terrified neighbours from the land of the Hittites in Babylon and Mesopotamia hastened to deliver tribute and gifts. Amenhotpe II was famous for his physical strength. The legend goes that no one could draw his bow.

According to an inscription on the slab between the front paws of the Great Sphinx at Giza, his son - the future pharaoh Thutmose IV - got a revelation in his sleep. He dreamed that a god asked him to free the Sphinx of sand which had drifted around it over the centuries. During his reign, Thutmose IV continued campaigning in Syria and Palestine, and suppressed a revolt in Nubia. Relations with Mittani improved and were cemented by a royal marriage.

The only military campaign undertaken by his successor Amenhotpe III was in the latter's fifth regnal year, when another revolt flared up in Nubia. In the remaining 33 years, Amenhotpe III reigned in peace, excess and splendour, devoting himself to extensive building. It was this pharaoh who reaped the fruits of the Empire built by his predecessors.

The magnificence of the world capital of Thebes drew the attention of the world to Egypt. Nothing could equal the building project launched by Amenhotpe in honour of Amun in the capital: the temple at Luxor. The so-called "colossi of Memnon," which were 21 m high, have survived from the king's mortuary temple. I am tempted to quote an extensive description of Thebes in the age of Amenhotpe III by M. Matye: "At the beginning of the 14th century B.C., the city embellished with numerous magnificent buildings acquired a complete architectural image. Reconstructed and enlarged, the chief temple of Amun, Ipet-Sut (now Karnak), acquired a uni-

form stylistic form. A second temple to Amun-Ipet-Res (now Luxor) was built to the south. The avenues of sphinxes linked not only the shrines on the eastern banks: descending to the Nile, they reemerged on the western bank. Across Karnak, they ascended northwards from the river to the pillared temple of Queen Hatshepsut, which stood out against the background of the cliffs, and southwards, just opposite Luxor, to the temple of Amenhotpe III with its wonderful colossi. These endless rows of stone buildings united the city in a single complex. The monumental gates of the numerous temples rose on the two banks - the pylons with the colossal statues of the pharaoh in front of them, and flags hoisted high on the top of towers. The gold-topped obelisks shone in the sun, and the temple colonnades towered over the city, the highest among them being the enormous papyrus-cluster columns of the gateways of Karnak and Luxor. This was how 'the most splendid of the cities of Egypt' looked."

Karnak documents Egyptian history in stone. That is where the main inscriptions and reliefs recording the age of the New Kingdom are. Unfortunately, Thebes has not been excavated yet.

The might of the state was embodied in the cult of the king. Deifying himself, Amenhotpe III actually started worshiping his own idols. Living in unrivalled splendour, the court believed that Babylon, Assyria, Mittani and Hatti were under the rule of the pharaoh. The Egyptian concept of world domination reached even continental Greece. However, only the kingdom of Alasiya on the island of Cyprus was actually dependent on Egypt.

Neighbour rulers eagerly sent their princesses to the harem of Amenhotpe III. He was married to two Babylonian princesses, three Mittanian and one from Arzawa in Anatolia. Their role at court was insignificant, since they were ultimately hostages. The principal queen and Queen of Egypt was the omnipotent Teye. Readily admitting foreign princesses to

his harem Amenhetpe III, however, refused to send one of his daughters to marry the king of Babylon, since no Egyptian princess had ever been allowed to marry a foreign ruler. The purity of the Egyptian dynasties was preserved by the female line, with the royal blood kept pure by marriages of the heirs with Egyptian princesses. Abiding by this rule, the Egyptian kings often married their sisters. Amenhotpe III also married some of his own daughters. He also conferred an unprecedented honour on one of his subjects. Amenhotpe III built a temple to his great contemporary and courtier Amenhotpe, the son of Khapy. With his activities, the latter was equal to the ancient sage Imhotep, and was later included in the pantheon of Egyptian gods; the Greeks also regarded "Amenophis, the son of Paapius" as one of their sages.

Amenhotpe III, however, initiated a policy that neglected Egyptian interests in Syria and Palestine. Blinded by the might of his Empire, he ignored the Hittite plots in the region and was not always capable of telling the difference between his true and his hypocritical allies, as the Amarna Letters (diplomatic correspondence found at Tell el-Amarna) attest. The nomadic Hapiru were a problem too. Scholars once tended to regard this as the first ethnonym of the Hebrews, but the academic community has since refuted this thesis. The successor of Amenhotpe III, who was preoccupied with internal affairs, did not pay adequate attention to Egypt's Syro-Palestinian holdings either, and that eventually forfeited pharaonic influence in the region.

The last year of Amenhotpe III's reign on record is the 38th.

THE THEOMACHIST KING. At the death of Amenhotpe III, three persons who, along with the pyramids, have become synonymous with Egyptian civilization in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, emerged on the historical scene: the reformer pharaoh, his lovely queen and the later successor to the Egyptian throne Tutankhamun, whose only contribution to history is his tomb, found unplundered.

The complexity of the changes in this period calls for a closer examination of the proper names of the actors in the dramatic events that followed the death of Amenhotpe III. Most names in this book, nor in it alone, are transcribed by the rules of the so-called "school reading." In a number of cases, this is satisfactory and does not pose a major obstacle to the translation of texts. The specific nature of the reforms of Amenhotpe IV, however, has long since necessitated a new reading of the name of the god of the sun-worshiping pharaoh. Egyptology has replaced the traditional but erroneous reading "Aton" by "Yot" (Yaty), and this has shed light on an important aspect of the reform. The Egyptian yot means both "father" and the visible aspect of the Sun, the "sun disk." Consequently, all names in honour of the new deity have changed. Akhenaten has become Akhneyot (Akh-na-Ya-ty), and the name of the sun-worshiping capital Akhetaten - Akhyot (Akh-Yaty). By the same rule, Tutankhaten has changed to Tutankhyot (Tut-ankh-yaty) - this pharaoh later changed his name to Tutankhamun.

Other principles have also necessitated a change in the conventionally read name Nefertiti. The name of the beautiful queen is Nefr-et (Naft-ita).

There are three distinct stages in the reign of Amenhotpe IV:

- 1. First to sixth regnal year;
- 2. Sixth to twelfth regnal year;
- 3. Thirteenth to seventeenth (?) regnal year.

You will hardly find an Egyptologist who has not written anything about the Amarna Period. Among the vast literature on the subject, I will single out two names: Cyril Aldred and his comprehensive study on the reformer pharaoh, and the St. Petersburg scholar Y.Y. Perepyolkin, whose survey on original sources in several volumes has revolutionized the study and concept of this complicated period.

The analysis of events in the first stage of Amenhotpe's reign dispels a number of myths that have accrued over the years. The facts show that until his sixth regnal year, Amenhotpe IV had no intention of breaking with the capital Thebes and with tradition. The erection of temples to Yot precisely in Thebes clearly shows what the king's intentions were. The popular thesis that the reforms of this Egyptian king were inspired by his lovely queen, who had made him her obedient servant, is just as baseless. Suffice it to cite the king's oath upon founding Akhyot inscribed on the border stelae:

<<...And if the queen tells me:</p>
"Behold, there is a wonderful site for Akhyot in another place!"
I Shall not heed her!...>>

In the first six years of the reign of Amenhotpe IV, the reform proceeded smoothly and the innovations easily fitted into life in the capital.

Amenhotpe IV was crowned in Amun's temple at Karnak, with which the new king attested his respect for Amun of Thebes and his priesthood. The king adopted a titulary that revered Amun and Thebes. His golden Horus name, however, described Thebes as "the Heliopolis of the South," but no one saw this as ominous since orientation northwards was considered natural. It was precisely in the north, in the holy capital of Memphis, that the prince had been educated. At coronation, the new king adopted the name of Nefrkheprure, or "Wonderful Are the Manifestations of Re," but this allegiance to the Sun God was again in the spirit of tradition. About a year after accession, however, Amenhotpe IV added to his name "Waenre" ("The Sole One for the Sun," i.e. "of exceptional importance for the Sun"). This epithet eventually became the king's favourite. Still, it was in no way against the spirit and tradition of the dynasty. Amenhotpe's predecessors had also considered themselves chosen by the Sun, stressing - as M.

Matye appropriately notes - that they had acquired their kingdom from the sun god Ra-Har-Akhet, not from Amun. Even the great-grandfather of the sun-worshiper, Amenhotpe II, had stressed:

"I have been chosen by my father Re.

It was he who decreed that this be."

Thutmose IV identified as "king born of Re," not of Amun. His successor Amenhotpe III was "chosen by Re" and "successor of Re." Amenhotpe IV carried on this tradition. Nevertheless, he made no innovations in completing his father's tomb, having it painted with the names and images of the traditional Egyptian deities. Until the end of his third regnal year, there were no attempts to persecute and banish the old deities.

Amenhotpe IV worshiped the Sun more than any other deity. The royal god was designated as the traditional Ra-Har-Akhet (Sun-Horus-of-the-Sky) Netjer-aa (The Great i.e. the elder god), Re (Sun). The palace also worshiped the primordial Heliopolitan god Atum who eventually, after the appearance of Re, was assimilated with the Sun God. As Y.Y. Perepyolkin has shown, the name "Yot" (the Visible Sun) was now readily used for the royal god, even though it was not yet as popular as it would eventually become.

By the third regnal year of Amenhotpe IV, the royal deity already had a temple in Thebes called "Home of Re Triumphant in the Sky." They had yet another temple to the Sun built in Thebes: "Home of Yot." Until Amenhotpe's third year on the throne, the nobility and the populace still regarded Amun of Thebes as superior to the royal god Yot.

Somewhere between the third and fourth year, the Sun acquired the name of "Ra-Har-Akhet, triumphant in the sky under his name of Shov [Late Egyptian for Sun] who is Yot." Amenhotpe IV proclaimed himself high priest of his deity. This priestly title was part of his titulary for several months. In the fourth regnal year, the old gods still kept their stature. Ac-

cording to Y.Y. Perepyolkin, however, the wealth of the temples was increasingly passing into the hands of Yot.

The end of the fourth regnal year was portentous. Amenhotpe IV declared his deity a reigning pharaoh! They started writing his name in two cartouches similar to that of the king. The newly ascended pharaoh also had a royal titulary. That same year the king and queen visited the site of the future sun-worshiping capital. The representation of the pharaoh god changed dramatically. The former image of a falcon-headed man with a sun disk on top was replaced by an orb with a solar or royal snake and radiating beams that ended in hands. According to Y.Y. Perepyolkin, this change is an "attestation that the king acknowledged a single manifestation of his deity - that of the visible Sun." The portrayal of the king and, later, his retinue, changed simultaneously. Abandoning the millennium-long canon, painters started portraying the king "naturalistically," and on the eve of the sixth regnal year his individual features were exaggerated to the point at which, to quote Y.Y. Perepyolkin, "those representations give the European an impression of grotesque caricatures. Back then, however, they were certainly not regarded as such." The break with the canon led to the depiction of domestic scenes and attempts to convey movement.

Around the fifth and sixth regnal year, the incomes of Amun were cut considerably. Nevertheless, the king had not yet broken off with either Amun or the old gods. His good will towards Amun and Thebes is attested by both the royal titulary and the building of temples to the royal deity nowhere else but in Thebes.

The border stelae at Akh-Yot, however, suggest eventual confrontation between the king and Thebes. They mention something "bad," "heard" even by the king's predecessors. According to these stelae, in the first and fourth year the king himself was forced to "hear" something. The passage that refers to the fifth and sixth years is badly damaged, but accord-

ing to Y.Y. Perepyolkin's analysis, those two years were even worse.

At the start of the sixth year, the king founded the new capital Akh-Yot ("Horizon of Yot"). The modern name of the site is el-Amarna - hence the "Amarna Period." The capital was in northern Egypt, on the right bank of the Nile. Abandoning Thebes, the king changed his proper name from Amenhotpe to Akhneyot ("He who is serviceable to Yot"). In the sixth year there is still no evidence of measures against the old gods.

The famous persecution of Amun of Thebes actually dates from the ninth and tenth years of Akhneyot's reign. Even the proper name of Akhneyot's father was expunged. The records from the ninth to twelfth years of his reign do not contain the words "gods" and "goddesses," or the names of the old gods. In that period the courtiers changed their names in honour of the royal deity. The analysis of New Egyptian society shows that the revolution conducted by the reformer pharaoh was associated with the intensifying struggle between the priesthood of Amun of Thebes, closely linked with the old hereditary nobility, and the newly made, bureaucratic aristocracy of *nemhu* origins. Tomb owners in the sun-worshiping capital declare their *nemhu* origins in the inscriptions.

Parallel with the religious reforms, a redistribution of wealth benefiting the new bureaucratic aristocracy was undertaken in Egypt. According to Y.Y. Perepyolkin, "the exclusive worship of the sun alone from the entire pantheon of Egyptian gods is doubtless associated with Akhneyot's increasing awareness of his royal authority"; Akhneyot opposed his reigning god to the old gods, who were above all gods of the Aristocracy.

Here are the distinct features of the new sun cult in Egypt, as expounded by Y.Y. Perepyolkin:

1. proclamation of the Sun as reigning pharaoh;

- 2. acknowledgment of the visible Sun as the sole manifestation of the new deity;
- 3. sole worship of the Sun ignoring all other gods of Egypt;
- 4. rejection of any myths and legends about the old world of the gods;
- 5. the god of the dead, Osiris, was no longer mentioned in the context of the afterworld. However, the doctrine of the human souls, of "the emergence of the dead from the underworld and the tomb at dawn", of the need of mummification, scarabs and ushabti figures, acquired a central role.

Before the beginning of the 12th year, the king virtually waged war on all old gods. Amun's name was excised across the land. Not even the cuneiform messages of foreign rulers were spared. A series of signs traditionally used in the names of the old gods were eliminated. Before the start of the 12th year, the word "god" in the singular was also expunged. Until then, only the plural form - "gods," "goddesses" - had been outlawed. The king and the sun disk only were now kings! This was the ultimate manifestation of the old doctrine of the king and the sun. Yot, the visible form of the sun, similarly to the king, was just a manifestation of the Demiurge. The king and Yot, the two kings, were his incarnations in this world. The autocratic rule of the Egyptian king reached its zenith.

Many scholars qualify Akhneyot's religious reform as a preface to Christianity, arguing that monotheism was introduced in Egypt and comparing the hymn to Yot to Psalm 104 in the Bible.

Y.Y. Perepyolkin expressly notes that Akhneyot's sun cult was never monotheistic. The theomachist king did not regard the gods as non-existent. On the contrary. He perceived them as effective forces, the most powerful among whom was "the king of the gods," Amun.

Our traditional notion of this age is largely associated with the famous portrayals of the royal couple. The pharaoh's family is bathed in love and warmth. Hence the amazement of scholars when archaeologists discovered that the lovely queen, similar to thousands of Egyptians in that period, fell victim to the unremitting wrath of the most ruthless sovereign in Egyptian history. The banished queen was replaced by the king's favourite, Keye (Kiya).

The queen's name, Nefr-et, means "The Beautiful One Has Arrived." This name was quite fashionable in the New Kingdom and there are no grounds to presume that she was a foreign princess. She was closely related to her husband, but was not the daughter of Amenhotpe III. Her sister Benre-mut was also famous at court for her outstanding beauty.

The two famous heads of Nefr-et were discovered on the site of Akh-yot in winter 1912. A bone fragment bearing the name of Thutmose was found in the ruins of a workshop, and that was automatically assumed to have been the proper name of the sculptor who created those masterpieces. There was even speculation of a relationship between Thutmose and Nefr-et. The truth has proved different. Thanks to M. Matye we now know that the two sculptures date from the end of Akhneyot's reign, therefore if Thutmose really lived in Akhyot, he should have changed his name in honour of the Sunto, for instance, Ramose. Y.Y. Perepyolkin believes that this bone fragment bearing the name Thutmose may go back to an earlier king.

The theomachist pharaoh reigned 17 years. Despite the ruthless measures, the Egyptians did not adopt his sun cult. The monuments from the Amarna Period are a mixture of Classical Middle and Late Egyptian, but this was a watershed age. Conditions were created for the ultimate assertion of Late Egyptian as the standard language.

Preoccupied with internal affairs, the pharaoh neglected Egypt's Syro-Palestinian possessions and his authority in the region weakened. The Hittites expanded their hold on Syria, and Palestine was overrun by the nomadic Hapiru. Relations

with the large Near Eastern kingdoms were strained as Amenhotpe IV did not deliver gold as generously as his father. Egyptian authority in Nubia remained comparatively stable. Apparently the last major international event in this period was the collection of taxes from the neighbouring peoples in the winter of the 12th regnal year.

After the death of the theomachist pharaoh, the Palace was at a loss about the future course of action. It paid unprecedented tribute to the name of the late pharaoh. Something unheard of occurred. The successor of Amenhotpe (Akhneyot) IV included in his titulary an epithet extolling himself as a favourite of the dead king. This is the only case in Egyptian history in which a king refers to another king's love for him. Y.Y. Perepyolkin notes that kings would extol themselves as favourites of particular Egyptian gods. Akhneyot thus replaced them in his successor's titulary.

Semnekhkare, Akhneyot's successor, restored the cult of Amun no later than his third regnal year. Akh-yot, however, continued worshiping the Sun. Writings still avoided the sign for "god." This applied to the sun-worshiping capital. The other capital, Thebes, resumed use of the sign and word for "god."

This prompted a sort of double standard in religion. Semnekhkere was about 20 years old when he died. His successor Tutankhyot worshiped the Sun, but he also worshiped the old gods. No later than his fourth regnal year, he changed his name, to Tutankhamun. So did the queen. Under Tutankhamun, Amun of Thebes finally achieved victory. The restored temples were also returned to the local nobility. The royal court, however, did not go back to Thebes but moved north to Memphis. Despite the changes, in the ninth regnal year "The Home of Yot" still owned vineyards. During Tutankhamun's reign, the Egyptians won a battle in the Syro-Palestinian region and, probably, in Nubia. The Egyptian army was under the command of the future pharaoh Haremhab.

Tutankhamun died around the age of 18. His last regnal year was the 10<sup>th</sup> (14<sup>th</sup>?). He was buried in the Valley of the Kings, near Thebes. His tomb was discovered by Howard Carter in 1922-1924.

The young pharaoh's attempts to leave heirs proved futile, as attested by two mummies of prematurely born babies in his tomb. His early death practically ended Dynasty XVIII.

After the king's death and the failed attempt to crown a Hittite prince as pharaoh, power over Egypt practically proved in the hands of the by then elderly Ay, the most interesting figure in Egyptian politics in the Amarna Period. He was the husband of queen Nefr-et's wet-nurse and was very proud of his title "father of god," i.e. father of the divine pharaoh by way of his wife who nursed the divine (queen). Upon ascension, he included this title in his royal titulary. Some scholars believe that precisely Ay pulled the strings of government under Amenhotpe (Akhneyot) IV, Semnekhkere and Tutankhamun. This statesman ruled Egypt for about four years. He was succeeded by the commander of the army, Haremhab, who eventually managed to arrogate enormous power as Akhneyot's sun cult declined.

Haremhab was not related to Dynasty XVIII. His claim to the throne was explained by the will of the gods Horus and Amun. Horus presented Haremhab to Amun, who crowned Haremhab as king of Egypt. Haremhab reigned for about 30 years. He was supported by the priesthood of Amun of Thebes and the old hereditary nobility. He decreed that the sunworshiping capital Akh-yot be razed to the ground. The splendid reliefs and statues from the temple to Yot were smashed to smithereens so that they could never be restored. In the records, the years of the reign of Akhneyot, Semnekhkare, Tutankhamun and Ay were included in Haremhab's reign. Thus in the official chronological tradition, Haremhab was supposed to have been the immediate successor of Amenhotpe III. Intense persecution of the name and

memory of the sun-worshiping king was undertaken, and in the rare cases in which he had to be mentioned, he was referred to as "the criminal (enemy) from Akh-yot."

At face value, the priesthood of Amun won a resounding victory. However, the army and the *nemhu* remained the mainstay of the king. Haremhab issued a special decree protecting the rights of the *nemhu*. The pharaoh himself spent more time in Memphis than in Thebes, thus ensuring greater freedom for himself and his retinue. Under Haremhab, empire was renascent and we again hear of Egyptian military victories in the south and in the north. Settlement of the dispute over Syria, however, was left to Dynasty XIX.

DYNASTY XIX. There was internal peace in Egypt when Dynasty XIX came to the throne. A certain balance of the antagonistic forces seems to have been achieved in Haremhab's reign, and this enabled the pharaohs of the new dynasty to refocus on the Syro-Palestinian holdings.

The kings of Dynasty XIX had close links with the North, as attested by the names which they adopted in honour of the Heliopolitan Re and Memphite Ptah. They were particularly devoted to the god Seth, which was something of a challenge to Amun and Thebes. If on the ideological plane the kings demonstrated their contempt for Thebes, economically they did not give the priesthood of Amun of Thebes any reason for discontent. Royal endowments to the temples were as rich as in the golden age of Dynasty XVIII, with the lion's share going to Amun.

The period from the start of the Amarna reform to the close of Dynasty XIX is marked by indicative declarations by officials of different rank which prove that they were descended from the *nemhu*, but had risen in status and wealth thanks to the king. There seem to be no such declarations after Dynasty XIX.

The first king of Dynasty XIX, Ramesses I, reigned for about two years. This was a time of stability, and that enabled his successor Sethoy I to undertake the recovery of the holdings of Thutmose III. For the first time in centuries since the fierce Amenhotpe II, the northern neighbours again saw an Egyptian king commanding the army. Egypt, however, was no longer up against fragmented petty states, but against the flowering Hittite kingdom which claimed control over the former Egyptian possessions. The last documented year of Sethoy's reign is the 11th. In his comparatively short reign, he succeeded in reasserting Egyptian authority in Palestine in the spirit of the tradition inherited from Thutmose III, and proceeded to challenge the Hittites in Syria. Of the Hittite vassals in Syria, the king of Amurru was particularly prominent. Fighting against the Hittites, Sethoy I also fought against their vassal Syrian princelings.

The war with the Hittite kingdom and its allies was quite successful for the Egyptians. Sethoy I ultimately regained control over Palestine and Syria. The exact northern border of his possessions is not known.

Although the Egyptians may have exaggerated their hold on northern Syria, they definitely controlled southern and central Syria. In the same imperial spirit of the past, they claimed authority in Assyria and Babylon. In those 11 years, Nubia did not create any trouble for the pharaoh, but clashes with the western neighbours, the Libyans, are on record.

Sethoy I was the last great conqueror in Egyptian history. After his death the world was no longer the same, and his successor Ramesses II again had to recover the northern provinces - despite his efforts, however, he failed to restore Egypt within the borders under his famous father.

Ramesses II reigned for most of the 13th century B.C. He initially had to subdue a rising in Nubia and punish the western neighbours. No later than the second year of his reign, he defeated the Shardanes in a naval battle (at one of the branches of the Nile or at sea). The captured Shardanes were drafted into the pharaoh's army. In his first regnal year,

Ramesses II declared himself high priest of Amun of Thebes, an office which he held until he found a suitable replacement.

In the fifth year of his reign, the great war with the Hittites broke out. The main source on this war are the Kadesh inscriptions, recorded years later. To quote G. Ebers, the Kadesh inscriptions were to be a "Homeric epic" for the Egyptians. Indeed, more than a millennium later the Egyptians would still read and recount them to foreigners, extolling their past military glory. They were probably last documented by Tacitus.

The two belligerent armies came into contact at the walls of Kadesh, a city on the Orontes River. Sethoy I once seemed to have succeeded in taking Kadesh. Five years after his death, Kadesh was documented as part of the anti-Egyptian coalition.

The Egyptian army consisted of four large divisions named after the principal gods of Dynasty XIX: Amun, Re, Ptah and Seth. Shardanes were also fighting on the Egyptian side. In addition, the Egyptians had a special task force made up of elite, perfectly trained warriors. This formidable army was challenged by a coalition assembled by the Hittite king. The at least 28,000-strong army of the Hittite king Muwatallis comprised almost all Anatolian and Syrian kingdoms. Discussing the Hittite coalition, Academician V. Struve writes the following: "Notably, among those countries are mentioned those which, according to the Iliad, supported the Trojans in their struggle with the Greeks." The Hittites sprung a trap on the Egyptians. Their scouts spread a rumour that the Hittite king, terrified by the Egyptian army, was still far from Kadesh. Ramesses fell for this false information and hurried his vanguard toward Kadesh, where the Hittites were concealed behind the city. Ramesses was surrounded. However, the special task force of the Egyptian army was marching towards Kadesh along the coast, and its timely arrival ultimately sealed the outcome of the battle. The main Hittite forces were struck

on two sides - by the fiercely fighting warriors of Ramesses II and by the fresh reinforcements in the rear. It is arguable whether the Egyptians were really lured into a trap, or whether the scouts of both armies were striving to outwit each other. In the final count, however, the Egyptians were the last to remain on the battlefield. A number of nobles from the Hittie coalition were wounded in the battle.

On the next day, Ramesses II struck again, but failed to win resounding victory. The Hittites avoided a direct engagement with the Egyptians, and Muwatallis first proposed an armistice.

Ramesses II succeeded in capturing Kadesh and driving the Hittites from southern Syria only after a 15- or 16-year war. In that war the Egyptians learned to take fortresses by storm. Ultimately northern Syria and the Amurru kingdom remained under Hittite control.

Along the coast, the Egyptians held a territory that extended at least to Tsumura (Simyra) to the north. Ramesses II failed to recover the holdings of Sethoy I. The new political situation called for new solutions. If Dynasty XVIII pharaohs could once raid Mittani and punish it for intervening in Syria, a campaign to distant Anatolia was now simply inconceivable. The Hittite kingdom, even though weaker than Egypt, was too distant to punish and was constantly involved in political intrigues in northern Syria. In the long Egyptian-Hittite wars, there is no evidence of direct engagement between the two armies. The Hittites did their best to avoid contact. The only major engagement was the battle of Kadesh, but even then the northern enemy preferred to resort to cunning rather than armed force. For their part, the Egyptians regarded the Syro-Palestinian possessions as a source of revenue rather than as their own territory.

This eventually led to a peace treaty with the Hittites in 21<sup>st</sup> regnal year of Ramesses II, later cemented by a dynastic marriage in the 34<sup>th</sup>. The Hittite princess became the king's chief

queen, adopting the Egyptian name of Maatnefrwre - "She who contemplates the beauty of the Sun," i.e. the king.

In the course of his long reign, Ramesses II moved his residence to the northern Delta. He built his capital on the site of the ancient Avaris, calling it Per-Ramesses Merj-Amun - He who is great with his victories. The city became capital of the pharaohs of dynasties XIX and XX. It has not been discovered and studied to date. The autocracy of the erstwhile sunworshiping king left its mark on the next generations of pharaohs. In self-deification, Ramesses II had no equal. He claimed that he had ruled the kingdom even before his birth. He was lord of the sky and the earth, and the gods came to pay him tribute. In the worship of his own idols, he surpassed even Amenhotpe III. A special priesthood oversaw the observance of the Ramesses II cult. Ramesses II was god of Nubia. He had a rock-cut temple at the Second Cataract of the Nile, Abu Simbel. There was a prodigious amount of building in Thebes, Abydos, Nubia.

The inscriptions attest that Ramesses II relied mainly on the *nemhu* XE "nemhu" □. His relations with the army □ XE "army" □ were so cordial that the warriors called him by the affectionate abbreviation "Sese□ XE "Sese" □" (Sesi□ XE "Sesi□). The sources from the age of Ramesses II imply hidden tensions between the priesthood □ XE "priesthood" □ of Amun□ XE "Amun" □ of Thebes□ XE "Thebes" □, on the one hand, and the nemhu, army and royal □ XE "royal" □ family □ XE "royal family" □, on the other. The Kadesh inscriptions □ XE "The Kadesh inscriptions □ themselves are imbued with an Amunocratic spirit and demonstrate contempt for the nemhu, the army and the royal family.

J.H. Breasted□ XE "J.H. Breasted" □ noted even in 1905 that the family of Ramesses□ XE "Ramesses" □ II□ XE "Ramesses II" □ had become quite an influential political factor. "He [Ramesses II] left such a noble family that the latter formed a peculiar noble class which even 400 years later bore the name

of Ramesses, along with its other titles, not as a patronymic but as a designation of class or rank." This family was quite contemptuous of Amun. The successor of Ramesses II, Merneptah, was a particular challenge to Thebes, as attested by his titulary and actions. For instance, in an inscription in Amun's temple in Thebes, Merneptah even dared ascribe the repulsion of the first invasion of the Libyans and the "Sea Peoples" not to him to whom the temple was dedicated - Amun, but to the Memphite god Ptah.

Ultimately, the reign of Ramesses II saw royal power in ancient Egypt □ became lord of animate and inanimate nature. His deification took specific forms. One of those specific aspects is embodied in the Kadesh "□ □, all the other gods being merely his assistants. The long reign is now presumed to have started either in 1304 B.C. or in 1290 B.C. Late in life, he married one of his daughters too. Ramesses II outlived many of his sons. He was succeeded by his thirteenth son Merneptah.

With his name, which means "Beloved of Ptah," and his actions, Merneptah consistently demonstrated allegiance to the north and contempt for Thebes. In the fifth year of his reign, he inflicted an overwhelming defeat upon the Libyans and the first wave of the so-called "Sea Peoples" (the more accurate term is "Overseas Peoples"). Meanwhile, Palestine also rebelled, which prompted the Egyptians to undertake a devastating punitive campaign. The commemorative stela dedicated to this victory is known as the "Israel Stela" as it contains the apparently earliest known reference to Israel. Merneptah reigned eight years. After the brief reign of his son Sethoy II, Egyptian history entered a very dark period of bitter internal strife. Towards the close of Dynasty XIX, the struggle between the old hereditary nobility and the nemhu intensified. The two antagonistic forces decided to launch a final battle, and we see another pharaoh following in Akhneyot's footsteps: Merneptah Sipthah, who reigned for about six years. Some time after he came to the throne, he deleted the name Meriamun, "He who is loved by Amun," from his titulary, replacing it by Setepenre, "Chosen by Re." He changed his name from Sakhenre to Akhnere! Y.Y. Perepyolkin notes in this connection: "Suffice it to replace the word "Re" by the other name of the sun, "Yot," and this resurrected the terrible name for Thebes Akhneyot, the name of Amun's mortal foe..."

The pharaoh included in his titulary "He who creates the Truth [Ma'at]," which was the name of the third, the condemned pharaoh Ay! At the death of this mysterious pharaoh, the crown went to queen Tausert, the widow of Merneptah's son Sethoy II, which brought Dynasty XIX to an end.

The unclear end of Dynasty XIX and the ascension of the next, Dynasty XX, are described at the beginning of the historical part of the legacy of Ramesses III. The papyrus documenting those events is known as the *Harris* Papyrus. It is 45 m long.

Apparently at the end of Dynasty XIX *nemhu* suffered a defeat, which terminated forever the ascending development of Egypt since the end of the Old Kingdom. After the ultimate victory of the hereditary nobility and the priesthood of Amun of Thebes, closely associated with the former, we no longer hear of displays of pharaonic benevolence towards the *nemhu*. Royal favours to this "caste" ended upon the accession of Dynasty XX, and Egypt backtracked to pre-reform or perhaps even earlier times. The fall of the *nemhu* was catastrophic for the army and military ranks, as proved by the fall of the Empire. Indulging the priesthood, the new pharaohs of Dynasty XX started reducing the number of Egyptians drafted into the army so as not to deprive temple estates of manpower.

The last years of Dynasty XIX happened to be "barren," i.e. lean. Apparently the waters of the Nile fell, as attested by the peculiar "Nilotian name" adopted by Sipthah on accession.

Until the end of Dynasty XIX there was a numerous Syrian contingent in the Egyptian army, and certain Syrians suc-

ceeded in rising quite high in the Egyptian hierarchy. There were many Syrian slaves too. The *Harris* Papyrus notes that at the end of the dynasty a Syrian, one Irsw, usurped power in Egypt and probably ascended the holy throne. Had the name been Egyptian, then it could have been arguably translated as "He who made himself," i.e. "Impostor." The final determinative, however, indicates the foreign origins of the name, and Y.Y. Perepyolkin has appropriately vocalized it as "Arsa." There is no other evidence on this Syrian who succeeded in acquiring the highest position in the Egyptian land. With the accession of Dynasty XX, the sources no longer mention the presence of Syrians in the Egyptian army.

Dynasty XX. The first king of Dynasty XX, Sethnakhte, restored order in the Valley. In the early years of the dynasty, persecution of the memory of Sipthah and queen Tausert was undertaken. The hereditary nobility triumphed. Setnakht was succeeded by Ramesses III, the last great king of Egypt. Ramesses III emulated his great predecessor Ramesses II in everything, trying to reproduce every single, albeit minor, aspect of his life and life at his court. Under Ramesses III, the replacement of Egyptians in the army by foreigners became tangible. Of the latter, the majority were Libyans. Despite the fall of the nemhu, relations between the nobility of the North and of the South remained strained.

Like Merneptah before him, Ramesses III had to repulse a series of invasions by the Libyans and the "Sea Peoples." This time, however, Egypt was invaded not by the vanguards of migration, but by the tribes themselves - men, women and children bringing all their chattels. The immigrants moved south by land and by sea.

The wave of marauding tribes that descended on Egypt had swept away the Hittite kingdom, Cyprus and Syria. The invasion was spearheaded by the Philistine and Tjekker peoples. The names of the latter's chieftains were not of Semitic origins. The decisive battles were fought in the eighth year of the rule

of Ramesses III, in which the pharaoh routed the enemy on land and at sea. Those who had destroyed the kingdom of the Hittites were crushed by the Egyptian king. After this staggering defeat, further invasions of Egypt by the "Sea Peoples" are not on record. Ramesses III settled the Philistines along the Palestinian coast. Twice - in his fifth and eleventh regnal years - he beat back the Libyans too. Military operations against Edom south of the Dead Sea, in the Amurru kingdom and in the former Hittite provinces in Syria are documented. The exact location of Egypt's northern border under Ramesses III is not known.

The pharaoh undertook an extensive building programme not only in Egypt, but also in Nubia and the Syro-Palestinian region. The best known edifice from this period is his mortuary temple in Medinat-Habou.

Ramesses III reigned for about 32 years. He fell victim to a plot contrived in his harem. The kings that succeeded him were all called Ramesses - from Ramesses IV to Ramesses XI by order of succession. After the last great pharaoh Ramesses III, no one was capable of halting the disintegration of the state. Towards the end of the dynasty, power over the South was eventually usurped by the high priest of Amun. The stability of Theban rule is evidenced by the fact that during the reign of the seven pharaohs from Ramesses III to Ramesses IX, the holder of the office of high priest in Thebes changed just three times!

Under Ramesses XI, the high priest of Amun in Thebes, Herihor, arrogated huge power and, in the last years or after the death of Ramesses XI, adopted a royal titulary.

After the death of Ramesses XI, Nesbanebded, vizier of the North, also declared himself pharaoh. The "priest-state" recognized the authority of the new pharaoh, who had been on good terms with Herihor even prior to accession. Egypt's break-up at the end of Dynasty XX into two semi-independent

kingdoms had been predetermined by developments ever since the middle of Dynasty XVIII.

Under Dynasty XX, Egypt started withdrawing within the boundaries of the Valley. Ramesses VI was the last king to leave traces in northern Palestine. After his reign, Egypt stopped extracting turquoise in Sinai. Nubia remained Egyptian under Ramesses XI too. The western neighbours - the Libyans - were constantly penetrating into Egypt. They sometimes got as far inland as the southern capital Thebes. We know of victorious military operations against the Libyans under Ramesses IX.

The end of Dynasty XX coincided with the end of empire: the Syro-Palestinian holdings were lost; neither did Phoenicia and Cyprus recognize the pharaoh. The Empire died. Egypt, however, kept its hegemony in the realm of the Spirit.

The northern king was considered lord of Upper and Lower Egypt, but the "priest-kingdom" managed to assert itself as a state within a state.

The accession of Nesbanebded marked the beginning of Dynasty XXI.

# Epilogue

# **DECLINE AND FALL**

Dynasty XXI, founded by Nesbanebded, partly retained the status quo from the late Dynasty XX. To the south, some of Herihor's successors confined themselves to the title of high priest of Amun, while others adopted a royal titulary too. The development of Egypt from dynasties XXI to XXIV is regarded as an immediate appendage to the New Kingdom. The changes in this period (11th to 8th centuries B.C.) were still insignificant. The 7th-6th centuries B.C. (dynasties XXV and XXVI) saw a change which Egyptology traditionally attributes to the dawn of the Iron Age in Egypt. Monetary relations intensified after the 7th century B.C. Debt slavery appeared for the first time in northeastern Africa.

In 700 B.C., northern Egypt started using the demotic script, which was also adopted - much later - by Thebes. The conditions created in that period characterized the development of Egypt right until Alexander the Great. After the decline and fall of the New Kingdom, the land of the pharaohs was controlled by the priesthood nobility and foreign mercenaries who had flooded northern Egypt in the reign of Dynasty XX. The holy Egyptian throne was seized by Libyan commanders (dynasties XXII and XXIII). Egypt was next conquered by the Kushites. The priesthood of Amun was an ally of the Kushite conqueror. The Kushites founded Dynasty XXV. Due to internal instability and disunity, the country ultimately succumbed to the Assyrians in 674-665 B.C.

Dynasty XXVI united Egypt in the struggle against the Assyrians and effected a temporary military-political and economic upsurge. In 525 B.C., the Persian king Cambyses con-

quered Egypt. In 332 B.C. Alexander the Great invaded the Valley as a liberator and was crowned with the divine wreathes of Egypt. As regards his divinity, the ancient legends are unanimous. It came foremost from the fact that Alexander the Great was King and Lord of Egypt.

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   AND THE HYKSOS INVASION
  - NEW KINGDOM

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